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"DEBAR."

BY ETHEL LYNN.

Round by the school-house shadow,
Close to the walnut-tree,
Rosy and warm, went Annie,
Fleet as a deer could be,
Doubling and turning sharply,
Tracing her pathway o'er,
Now by the crazy window,
Now by the battered door.

Almost a pris'ner taken,
Slipping her captor's grasp,
Touching the tree trunk softly,
Safe from a daring clasp—
"Debar." The wide woods echo
The ringing joyous tone,
"Debar." She stands triumphant,
Her gold-spun hair outblown,
One bare foot lightly resting
Over its fellow brown,
One hand the tree trunk touching,
One twisted in her gown,
Shouting the mystic legend,
Key of the childish play,
Where touch and cry together
Bar friends and foes away.

O, merry panting Annie,
I have run faint and far;
Find for me some such shadow,
Where I may cry "Debar"
To sin, and wrong, and weakness,
Faint heart and weary care,
So they may halt beyond me
In safety guarded there.

Better than Druid temple,
Beneath the oak-tree's shade,
Would be such sylvan altar:
"Canst find one, little maid?"

The Plot Against Hawley;

OR, THE

PRISONER OF DESOLATION.

By LEON LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MAGICIAN," "RED KNIFE," "THE BROKEN HOME," "EDDY'S SEARCH," "THE CLUB-FOOT BEAR," "MARK HEBER'S LUCK," ETC.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TABLES SUDDENLY TURNED.

The surprise of Fisty Bantam, the leader of the runaway convicts from Australia, at the presence of a human being in the strange grotto of the island of Desolation, in which we left him, was expressed by the quickness with which he leaped several paces backward, at the same time drawing a revolver.

In the dim light pervading the place, he did not see the madman distinctly, or note his singular garb, nor did he mark the strangeness of his questions. He merely saw that some one was there, and the mere fact of that some one's presence was enough to startle him.

"What! inhabitants here?" he cried, in the quick, sharp accents of a sudden alarm.

The madman's good-natured grin at once gave place to a look of contempt, as he drew his vast seal-skin robe closely about him.

"Inhabitants!" quoth he. "Why, did you suppose this island to be *un*inhabited?"

"Of course I did—"

"The more fool you, then!" roared the madman, slashing the point of his old rusty cutlass against the adjacent rocks. "Where have you been all your life, Bantam?"

Bantam was doubly confounded.

"Speak, Bantam!" roared the madman. "From what cloud have you just dropped down upon this island, that you are so foolish as to suppose it uninhabited? Why, the population of this island has been between four and five thousand for many years past! It has a governor, a council, chief-justices, and a garrison of six hundred British soldiers, to say nothing of *my* retinue—"

Fisty Bantam recoiled still further, holding his revolver in readiness for use.

"Six hundred British devils!" he shouted, sending a wild glance of terror around upon his followers. "Do you hear that my rabbits?"

The entire body of runaways *had* heard, and were already jostling and crowding one another in a hurried retreat toward the narrow passage by which they had entered the grotto.

"England 's allers colonizing," added Bantam, "and she 's colonized here lately, it seems, and we didn't even suspect the fact! And we 've accordingly run our necks into a noose! Ten to one there 's been a penal settlement formed here! This old chap looks like some sort of a governor. He 's evidently dressed to live under ground! We must dig, boys! Get out of this!"

The retreat became disorderly. In their circumstances, the thought of sharing the island with a colony which included six hundred British soldiers, was naturally demoralizing to the convicts, who knew that capture was equivalent to death.

"There have of course been great changes here since the death of Sir Hudson," the madman proceeded to explain, as he stalked after the retreating convict leader. "The awful convulsions which have taken place here have scarcely a parallel in history! Whole towns have been swallowed up; mountains have been cast into the sea; the sea has been changed into land; and I myself—why, sir, I've nearly lost my wits in trying to keep track of things! The island itself has swelled up to one hundred times its original size—"

"Off! Don't come near me!" cried Bantam, to whom the words of the madman were lost in the rush and roar of footsteps. "Off! off!"

The madman was pleased at the visible terror and desperation of the horde thus flying before him. He drew himself up proudly, halting.

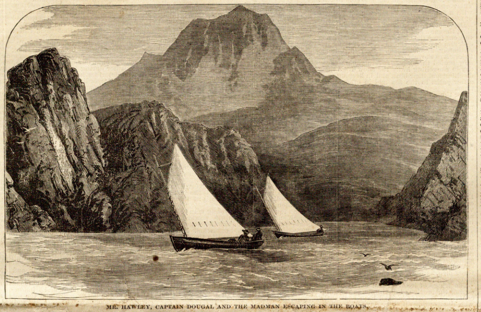
"So much for being a great conqueror!" he exclaimed, chuckling. "They have evidently recognized me as the great Napoleon. They fly like sheep—as at Austerlitz! Ho, ho! Another victory—as at Wagram!"

He slashed and hammered his cutlass upon the rocks around him, with a delighted sense of triumph, and then turned upon his heel and beckoned to Will. and Capt. Dougal, who had remained invisible throughout the interview amid the shadows of the inner depths of the grotto.

"This way, Admiral!" he shouted. "This way, Marshal! Now is our time! Ho, ho!"

The retreat of the runaways was not a little accelerated by these cries.

"Now is indeed our time," whispered Will. to Dougal. "We must find that secret passage spoken of by Bantam—the one leading to the sea. You look for it among the crevices behind us, while I take charge of the madman."



MR. HAWLEY, CAPTAIN DOUGAL AND THE MADMAN ESCAPING IN THE BOATS.

"We had better first let off a few shots from our revolvers to complete the scare of these ruffians," suggested Dougal.

"Very well. We will."

The thought was instantly acted upon, and such were the countless echoes of the rocky chamber, that the runaways supposed that scores of muskets had opened fire upon them, and their flight along the approaches of the grotto became a desperate scramble.

Will. touched the madman upon the arm.

"This way, sire," he said. "We must follow the Marshal, if we would reap the reward of our victory."

"Forward then! Take whatever course you deem best, Admiral."

Dougal had struck a match, and its flame had instantly indicated a current of air through the grotto, in the very direction Bantam had been upon the point of taking at the moment of his encounter with the madman.

Almost holding his breath, Dougal stepped in the direction thus pointed out.

In the midst of several fissures, he soon drew near to one deeper than the others—one into which a current of air was steadily setting, as was indicated by a second match.

And as this opening soon extended into a sort of corridor, Dougal knew that he had found the opening leading to the sea.

"This way, sire! this way, Hawley!" he called, in a tone expressive of a profound relief. "Here is the secret passage!"

Passing his arm through the madman's, Will. drew him toward the spot from which the voice of Capt. Dougal had proceeded.

Into a deep, dim recess plunged Dougal, and then along a narrow passage which seemed to have once been a mere fissure in the rock, and to have been artificially enlarged and straightened.

Will. and the madman continued to follow him, lighting their way with matches, in accordance with Dougal's example.

After a slow and toilsome march of some forty yards in a devious passage-way, Capt. Dougal reached a point where, upon turning an abrupt angle, he perceived a vivid gleam of light at the end of the passage.

He knew that this light came from the outer world, and the fact completed the hope and sense of relief with which the discovery of the passage had inspired him.

Halting, he waited for Hawley and the madman to overtake him.

"Our way is now clear," he said, pointing toward the light.

In a moment more, continuing to press forward briskly, the two emerged from the rocky passage, reaching the open air.

Their joy at this escape was excessive.

The grotto was toward the interior of the island, as we have said, but the island has many deep fissures reaching into the land, and the head of one of these inlets was not far distant from the secret entrance of the grotto.

The first movement of Will. was to gain the beach, and thus place the crests of several rocky ridges between him and the runaways, whose voices were heard in noisy confusion inland, and then he halted, turning to the madman.

"Sire," said he calmly, "your majesty can now save us—as at the bridge of Lodi."

The madman flourished his rusty cutlass as fiercely as if about to equal the exploits of the memorable day referred to.

"We must take a short cut back to Christmas Harbor, sire," went on Will. rapidly.

"To the hut, you mean?"

"No, to the boats of these intruders. You can lead us straight to those boats?"

"Of course."

"And in much less time than they will require to get there?"

"Certainly. I'll take a short cut, as you suggest."

"Lead on then, I pray! The Marshal and I will follow you closely."

The madman bowed a grave approval, and set out for the head of the harbor named at a rate of speed which attested how well his constant peregrinations over the island had kept him in training.

For some minutes not a word was spoken, as Will. and Dougal had about all they could do to keep pace with their guide, but as soon as all sounds of the runaways had died out behind them, our hero spoke.

"That Fisty Bantam is shrewd," he said. "He will soon be on the move in this direction. The thought of six hundred British soldiers threw the whole band off their balance for a moment, but they'll soon recover their self-possession. They'll make a brief search for us in the grotto, and then break in this direction."

"But what is your idea concerning the boats?" asked Dougal.

"My idea is to seize them—to push them off—"

"If we can."

"We *must* push them off! Our lives are at stake! We can no more live upon this island, after what has happened, than we can fly."

"But the boats are unseaworthy, as I told you."

"True, and I have no intention of putting to sea in them. They are leaky and shattered, and we have no provisions. But they will enable us to get clear of Desolation itself, and of all the reptiles upon it. We will go to one of the little islands a mile or two off the mainland—just far enough, in fact, to be perfectly free of all danger from the runaways, who will not have so much as an oar or a spar at their service, and who will accordingly be confined to the mainland as in a prison."

"Good! Capital! This movement—and this alone—will save us! If we get the boats off, we shall have the means of getting about, while the runaways will be close prisoners upon the island."

The project was communicated to the madman, who thereupon quickened his steps, so rational was his conception of the emergency; and in a few minutes more the trio burst out upon the sandy beach at the head of the harbor, and in full view of the boats.

"Thank Heaven!" cried Will., in astonishment. "The boats are in the water—at least one of them. I never dreamed of such good fortune!"

"And not a soul is near them," returned Dougal.

A couple of minutes thereafter, the boats were reached. One of them was afloat, and the other poised upon a steep bank, close to the water, it being high tide.

"The oars are here, and the sails," announced our hero, looking into the boats one after the other.

"The runaways have evidently been trying to catch some fish for their breakfast," surmised Dougal. "Here are lines and bait, and also some ropes and an ax. Here is quite a lot of the provisions taken from the *Dower*, including blankets and clothing. The runaways evidently meant to get rested from their labor at the pumps before removing these things to their camp."

"Or they may have been called away to look at the grotto, or been a little uncertain as to their course," suggested Will.

"Be that as it may," noted Dougal, looking through the boats, "there are lots of things here which will be of great service to us. Yonder is a barrel of nice pork which I had brought aboard at Sidney for my own use. Here are also several barrels of biscuit. The bulk of these stores are in the boat which is already afloat."

"Ho, ho! This is famous!" roared the madman.

The plan of our hero for getting off the boat that was still ashore was formed in an instant.

He seized the ax to which Dougal had called his attention, and by a few well-directed blows resolved into its original staves the nearest barrel, which happened to be a barrel containing sea-biscuit. These staves he greased with a piece of salt pork, and then he placed them under the keel of the boat forward and between its stem and the water, in such a way as to provide a complete track for its descent.

"Now then, all together!" cried Dougal, putting his shoulder to the stern of the boat. "We must and will move it."

The madman hastened to lend his aid, as did Will., and the trio tugged at the boat together. At first it did not move, but a giant effort finally started it, and a good bearing soon began to be secured upon the staves Will. had placed under and in front of it. Then it slipped more easily, and ere long it moved continuously, with less and less effort, and the next moment took a final rush and plunge into the sea.

"That 's glorious!" cried Douga

"There is hardly time to pillage the enemy's camp," said Will., listening to a buzz of voices which had begun to resound from the distance. "The runaways are coming pellmell. One of their first thoughts, after their panic cooled, was of their boats and stores, of course. We shall not have time to secure anything more safely, and must be contented with what we have already recaptured. Fortunately," and he ran his eye again over the contents of the boats, "we have nothing to complain of."

Dougal assented to these observations.

"I will take his majesty with me in this largest boat," added Will., "and you may take charge of the other. We must be lively too. Those voices are getting louder every moment."

They worked with the energy inspired by the danger—the madman toiling as heartily and usefully as the others—and were soon clear of the shore. Then the mast of each boat was stepped, the sail set, the tiller taken, the course laid for the open sea, and away they went in joyous triumph together.

"The cat is skinned!" cried Dougal, with a fierce glow of exultation upon his features. "This is an awful turning of the tables upon them. The villains are for the moment as helpless as so many lobsters in a pot. They haven't so much as a raft, and not a stick of wood so big as your thumb at their disposal."

"Ho, ho!" chuckled the madman.

Will. Hawley did not say a word, but he raised his eyes reverently to heaven, and a thrill of joy and relief pervaded his whole being, as he realized how narrowly he had escaped with his life from the terrible perils of the morning.

The boats had hardly gathered headway, and were still within ten rods of the shore, when a yell of awful rage and dismay resounded from one of the hill-tops overlooking the scene on the south side of the head of the bay.

This yell came from Bantam.

"There they are!" breathed Dougal.

The cry of Bantam was instantly caught up by his followers, as they came rushing into view, and speedily swelled to an uproar of murderous fury, as the whole horde came tearing down the slopes of the shore toward the water.

"Too late, my fine fellows," was all the comment Will. chose to make upon their efforts.

The boats were now under full headway, and were rapidly sweeping beyond the reach of the enemy's revolvers and muskets, but the fact did not prevent the maddened wretches from letting off volley after volley at the trio from their fire-arms, while they rent the air with their curses and threats. A number of them even waded into the sea, in their desperation, with the intention of swimming after the boats, but were restrained by their calmer companions, who realized, of course, the utter madness of such a proceeding. And so it came to pass that Will. and his friends sailed away with the two boats and everything in them, and left the runaways howling and cursing upon the shore of the island.

About a mile from the shore, or half-way down the harbor, Will. suddenly hove his boat to, looking back at the runaways.

"We are perfectly safe here," he said. "And now a word as to our course."

Dougal also hove to, giving Will. his attention.

"We haven't a drop of fresh water in the boats," resumed Will., "nor have we any water casks, as the runaways didn't take the trouble to remove any from the *Dower*. Neither have we sufficient provisions for a voyage to Australia or to the Cape of Good Hope, the two nearest available points. And even if we had water and provisions, we should be fools to set out in these wretched boats for either Perth or the Cape. If the boats were strong, and we were fully provisioned, we might set out for the usual track of Australian bound ships, with the hope of being picked up, but even then that would be a rash measure—so rash as to be permitted only to men in the last stages of desperation."

"I agree with you," said Dougal. "Putting to sea is out of the question, until we are driven to the last extremity."

Will. sighed profoundly.

"God alone knows how hard it is for me to stay here," he said. "My poor wife will be told that I am dead—and death may indeed overtake me before I get clear of this island. You can imagine how I long to fly to her! You can imagine what pangs every hour of delay costs me! If we now had one chance in ten or twenty, I do not know what I should be tempted to do, upon my own account."

"As the case stands, however, we must remain here. We cannot put to sea."

"Nor can we remain here without peril," declared Will. "I think Bantam expects company."

"I know he does," affirmed Dougal. "I've heard something said about an understanding he has with the pirates—with the famous Malay Gunner—and also with another band of convicts who were about to strike for their freedom in Van Diemen's Land. There must be something of this kind in the wind, or the runaways would not have burned the *Dower* so promptly."

"You are right," returned Will. "These villains are expecting an arrival of friends and allies from one day to another. In any other case they would have saved the water casks of the *Dower*, or at least a portion of them. And when these allies arrive, Bantam will have the same advantage over us that we now have over him. But in the mean time—"

"Well, what shall we do in the mean time?" asked Dougal, after Will., relapsing into silence, had reflected a few moments intently.

"The *Thunderer* was at Perth," recalled Will., "and you think it is quite as possible for us to serve up the *Thunderer* to our enemies, in the course of a few days, as for them to serve up the Malay Gunner or any other ally to us?"

"I do, certainly."

"You realize, too, that some ship may come here for water, or some whaler call for wild cabbages?"

"Of course."

"Then, in view of all else, the only course for us to take is already pointed out," concluded Will. "We'll push on to our new quarters."

He hastened to resume his course down the bay, and Dougal followed him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SHUT IN BY WINTER.

Early on the morning of Sunday, December 29, 1776, Capt. Cook, the great navigator, sailed from Desolation.

We give an extract from his narrative:

"As soon as the ships were out of Christmas Harbor, we steered south-east-half-south, along the coast, with a fine breeze at north-north-west, and clear weather. This we thought the more fortunate, as, for some time past, fogs had prevailed, more or less, every day, and the continuance of them would have defeated our plan of extending Kerguelan's discovery. We kept the lead constantly going, but seldom struck ground with a line of fifty or sixty fathoms.

"About seven or eight o'clock, we were off a promontory which I called Cape Cumberland. It lies a league and a half from the south point of Christmas Harbor, in the direction of south-east half-south. Between them is a bay with two arms, both of which seemed to afford good shelter for shipping. Off Cape Cumberland is a small but pretty high island, on the summit of which is a rock like a sentry-box, which occasioned our giving that name to the island."—*Cook's Voyage*, vol. I., chap. 5. London: 1784.

Now Will. Hawley, on sailing out of Christmas Harbor, had no ships, only two leaky boats; but he steered in the same direction that the great navigator had steered before him, and he had the same "fine breeze at north-north-west," the same "clear weather," and the same immunity from the fogs which prevail at Desolation, "more or less, every day."

And the objective point of Hawley's course was Sentry-box island.

Upon rounding Arched Point, and bearing away to the southward, following the tread of the land, Will. saw this island distinctly, some four miles ahead, on account of its being, as Capt. Cook has described it, a "pretty high island."

He pointed it out to Dougal and the madman.

"It is there that we will establish ourselves," he said. "We shall be safe there from the runaways, as there is a deep channel, a mile in width, between the mainland and the island. And the other thought that decides me is the fact that we shall be able to see from that island every ship which may approach Christmas Harbor."

"That last is a good reason enough," commented Dougal. "If friends come here, we ought to catch the first glimpse of them, and if an enemy should arrive, why, we can't be informed of the fact any too soon."

"There is still another reason for our going to Sentry-box island," continued Hawley. "It is handy to the mainland, upon which we shall have to remain dependent for many of our supplies, and to which we shall have to make frequent visits. In short, it is the best point possible from which to keep an eye on the runaways and to watch for a ship."

Dougal readily assented, as did the madman, and the boats swept on toward their destination. They were soon shut out by Arched Point from the view of the runaways, and in about half an hour were grounded upon one of the few little beaches, in the form of an instep, which constitute the sole landing places upon Sentry-box island.

"Our lot might be worse," said Dougal, stepping ashore. "Let us always remember that, in all our troubles and dangers."

The island is a mere rock, barren and bare, of course. A few marine birds and a couple of seals were visible at the instant of our little party's advent upon it. Not a shrub or a blade of grass was to be seen. Fresh water stood in pools in various basins and hollows. No kind of shelter was anywhere afforded.

"Some sort of dwelling must be our first care," said Hawley, as he also landed, followed by the madman.

"And that dwelling must be one of our boats," returned Dougal. "We must draw the boat ashore, and stretch its sail over it, in the form of a roof—"

Will. shook his head gloomily.

"That would answer for a stay of a few days only," he said; "but we must proceed on the supposition that we are to remain here a long time. We must get the boat ashore, as you say, and then turn it bottom up, and thus convert its bottom into a roof, to bear up the fearful snows of the coming winter. We must put a stout underpinning along the sides of the boat, to sustain its weight, and to increase the height of our apartment, and we must bank up this underpinning with sand and stone and gravel. In short, we will go to work exactly as if we meant to stay here forever."

"Your plan is the right one," Dougal hastened to respond. "In such uncertainties as now beset us, we must prepare for the worst. It is pleasant enough here now, to be sure, because it is now summer—the 28th of November—but this season is a short one, in this latitude, and we shall soon have old Boreas blustering rudely around us. Let's make ourselves a dwelling, therefore, of one of our boats, and keep the other in readiness for our necessary trips to the mainland, and also for flight, since flight may at any minute become our sole resource."

The two went to work upon this basis, and in the course of the day succeeded in getting the smallest boat into the desired position ashore, and in turning it over, securing their various effects under it. A supper was made of hard biscuit and salt pork, with rain water for their drink, and the three men then wrapped themselves in their blankets and lay down to sleep. A heavy rain which came on early in the evening did not seriously incommode them, as they had placed all their effects upon stones, and made their beds upon the tops of their barrels and boxes, and they slept soundly during the whole night.

The following day proved so rainy, however, that they did not feel like leaving the shelter of their boat, except to procure drinking water and to draw their other boat higher upon the little peninsula upon which they had resolved to keep it. They talked almost incessantly, therefore, from morning until evening. As they could not see a quarter of a mile in any direction, on account of the thick weather, they did not maintain any watch. They knew that no ship, whether friend or foe, would undertake to reach the island in the dense fog that prevailed, and they were equally certain that the runaways were alike ignorant of their whereabouts and unable to come off to the island.

The third day was showery, but not wet enough to keep the trio from their labors. Several similar days succeeded, and were all devoted to busy toil, so that at the end of their first week upon the island the unique habitation of the three men was completed.

And a neat, snug dwelling-place it was.

There was an open space under the centre of the boat that was nearly high enough to admit of its occupants standing erect. The entrance, which was upon the side next to the water, was low and narrow, of course, compelling one to stoop, but this feature was not objectionable, inasmuch as it rendered the interior less accessible to the cold, piercing winds of the island. This interior was a sort of cellar, we must admit, on account of the stone-wall, with mud cement, by which it was inclosed, but a few armfuls of coarse grass from a bog behind Cape Cumberland remedied this drawback, by hiding the wall, as well as the floor, from view and contact, and everything within the apartment was so arranged as to give it a neat and cozy aspect.

"We can begin living now," said Dougal, with cheerful patience, as he sat upon a stone before the boat dwelling, and bent swift glances upon the shores and waters around him. "We must get hold of some young ducks for our dinner to-morrow, and procure a good mess of wild cabbages from any point of the mainland that we can visit without risk of being caught by the runaways. A bunch of those little cresses you have described to me, Hawley, will add to our repast, and for once we must manage to command the luxury of a fire. We shall have to busy ourselves with all these little miseries, you know, in order to prevent our time from hanging heavily on our hands."

"Of course," assented Hawley, "and if the weather is not too hazy I mean to pass a good share of to-morrow in watching the entrance of Christmas-Harbor. I have a good glass at my service, and I should hate to be caught napping. There is another thing too, that will claim our attention at an early day, and that is, the capture of a dozen or two of seals to supply us with furs for next winter."

Various other projects were discussed, and then the two men exchanged congratulations upon the great services they had received from the madman. He had not only toiled incessantly with them in preparing the boat hut, but his long residence upon Desolation had qualified him to offer a great many suggestions of the first importance.

"His presence here is a great mercy and blessing to us, Dougal," concluded Hawley, "even as our society is a great comfort and consolation to him. Poor fellow! if any good fortune ever comes to me, he shall certainly share it."

"He has acted so well during the past week," said Dougal, "that it seems reasonable to hope that he may yet become of sound mind again. He must have been a wild fellow in his day, but I believe he was always good-hearted, and that there is nothing really base or vile about him."

A cry of warning and surprise came from the madman, who was stalking back and forth upon the little plateau in front of his friends.

"We have finished our work just in time," he announced smilingly. "It will not want for admirers. The runaways are upon the point yonder. I can both see and hear them."

He pointed toward Cape Cumberland, which was a mile distant, the reader will remember, and the nearest point of Desolation.

Arising and advancing, both Will. and Dougal looked earnestly in that direction.

"He is right," said our hero.

"Bring your glass," suggested Dougal.

The glass confirmed the discovery.

The runaways had appeared in force upon the extreme point of the Cape, and were moving about excitedly, with wild gesticulations, and making a great uproar, with all their attention turned upon Sentry-box island.

"They are terrible to look at, with only this little arm of sea between them and us," murmured Hawley.

"But that arm of the sea is a sufficient barrier to their nearer approach," declared Dougal. "There are men there, doubtless—and Fisty Bantam is one of them—who would not shrink from a swim of a mile in still water, but here swimming is another matter."

"That's so," assented Hawley. "There is a flood tide here running two knots an hour, as Captain Cook has mentioned, and there are all sorts of currents, with patches of seaweed through which no swimmer could pass. We are safe enough until the villains manage to get hold of a boat, or of the materials for building a raft. But I do not imagine that either of these resources will soon be at their disposal. I remember that Captain Cook was unable to find a single stick of wood anywhere upon the island, or lodged against it."

The night fell upon these speculations, shutting out the runaways from view, but their cries continued to be heard until toward midnight.

No set watch was kept by Will. and his friends, but the nearness of the runaways, and especially their noise, had the effect of rendering him wakeful, and he arose several times during the night to make the tour of his little domain, and look toward Cape Cumberland and listen.

The days lengthened to weeks, and the weeks grew to months. The rain descended in torrents almost daily, and high gales of wind were frequent. No sail of any kind appeared. Will. and his friends kept themselves close to their little island, and the runaways remained permanently at the foot of Cape Cumberland. A portion of them had evidently continued to occupy their camp at the head of Christmas Harbor, to watch for their allies, or for their enemies, for Will. could never count more than twenty-five or thirty at once. During the first few days of their occupation of Cape Cumberland, they fired several shots daily, with their best muskets, at Will. and his companions, but they were not long in realizing the uselessness of these demonstrations, as the balls fell far short, and in concluding to save their ammunition.

The summer of '52 and '53 was thus spent—December, January, February and March—and the cold, gloomy fall set in. The rain became almost incessant, and the gales grew more and more terrific. Then came a calmer season of cold and frost, as the herald of approaching winter.

"The summer is ended, and we shall see nothing of any ship until spring," said Hawley sadly one day, after he had wrapped himself in his first suit of sealskin. "Ships never come here between March and October, which interval corresponds to our winter. We are booked for six months more of captivity, certain!"

"Well, the runaways are equally bad off," returned Dougal. "Strange that no one has come to their relief. There must be a hitch somewhere in their affairs. I've been expecting every day, for months past, to see some friend or ally come to their rescue."

"The Malay Gunner may have come to grief, and ditto that gang of runaways expected from Van Dieman's Land," suggested Hawley. "Or there may be nothing in the remarks you overheard about these worthies. The only certainty seems to be that we are booked for a winter's residence here, and that we must continue to have Bantam and his men for our neighbors."

"Well, there is one comfort left us, since we must remain here," said Dougal. "We have spent these several months wisely. We have a house that will stand any attack that rain or snow or wind can make upon it. We have plenty of furs for clothing, a large supply of food, a store of fat for oil, a bundle of resinous roots for wicks, dried turf for fuel, and a good supply of arms and ammunition. The case might be worse, as I have so often told you."

The following day was gusty and lowering, with raw winds, and a constantly increasing coldness. It seemed, in fact, too cold to rain. This sort of weather lasted a week, and then, with a furious snow squall, the long winter of Desolation set in.

Day and night, without a moment's cessation, the snow continued to come down, shutting out from the view of Will. and his friends everything except the few rods of space immediately around them. They had made themselves shovels of barrel heads, and they now busied themselves several hours every day in shovelling away the snow from their dwelling and their boat, and in keeping open a few paths to the sea and in other directions.

For three days and nights did this heavy snowfall continue, and then it ceased temporarily, the sky lightening, and the three men looked forth from their snug quarters.

The island of Desolation was one mass of whiteness. The snow was ten or twelve feet in depth upon a level, and in the ravines had accumulated to the depth of fifty or one hundred.

At the extreme point of Cape Cumberland, the white mantle had been tracked and stirred.

The runaways were still there.

Ice was forming rapidly off the Cape, and a vast field of it was creeping out toward Sentry-box island, as if to bridge the channel.

"This may be our last view of the shore, for the present," said Will., as a shower of flakes came whirling around him, intercepting his view in every direction. "Here it comes again! We must stow ourselves away again in our boat hut."

All the next night and day did this immense fall of snow continue incessantly, and then there was another pause in its fury—a break of an hour's duration, in which the surrounding waters and the shore of Desolation again became visible.

A volley of excited exclamations escaped the three men, as they hurried out of their hut and looked toward Cape Cumberland.

The fringe of ice Will. had barely noticed during the previous lull, it was so insignificant; this fringe of ice had been constantly widening, during all these days of tempest, and had grown to a vast ice-field, whose outer edge had now advanced to within a quarter of a mile of Sentry-box island.

The strait was three-fourths bridged.

No sign of the runaways was visible.

A long and fruitless series of speculations followed, and would have lasted for hours, had it not been interrupted by the storm, which began again, with redoubled fury, driving the trio back to their shelter.

The succeeding two days were so stormy that Will. and his friends left their hut only to keep their door-way clear and their paths to the sea open. To maintain a watch for any length of time was simply impossible, in the face of such a storm, and the trio did not attempt to maintain any. They were not even tempted to watch, the weather remaining too thick for them to see a dozen rods in any direction.

The storm had thus raged almost continuously about a week, when, one afternoon, Will. and Dougal, seated in their boat dwelling, were talking to each other of their homes and their loved ones. The madman was silent upon his bed, in a fit of profound discouragement. The apartment was well lighted by several wicks in a large basin of melted fat. A stout door of wood had been made from a couple of boxes, and fitted closely into the door-way, with a covering of fur, so that the occupants of the hut did not experience the least discomfort from all the warring elements without.

"How snug we are here!" Will. could not help saying, after a brief pause in the conversation.

"And yet the storm without is horrible," murmured Dougal.

Both men listened, by a mutual impulse. The wind was raging like a beast of prey. Now and then, above the roar of the waves, was heard a loud crash, as a huge cake of ice was hurled against the neighboring rocks. All around the island reigned wildness, solitude, and violence.

"This wind is breaking up the ice along the shore and scattering it," added Dougal.

"And this will make the channel between us and the runaways as wide and as impassable as ever," declared Hawley.

A strange cry resounded above the roar of the elements at this juncture—a cry of anguish and despair—a cry in which a moan and a wail seemed to be blended.

The three men leaped to their feet.

A crunching of footsteps upon the frozen path leading from the sea succeeded, and the strange wailing and moaning cry was repeated.

The trio caught at their weapons.

The crunching footsteps came nearer and nearer, but slowly and irregularly, until they ceased suddenly at the entrance of the hut, and were succeeded by a quick, sharp knock upon the door.

"Open! open!" yelled a voice gaspingly—a voice so freighted with pain and horror as to be appalling.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A READY RESPONSE.

Dr. Sam. Duncan, Chancellor of St. Mary's, was a radical man, as set and rigid in his opinions as he was odd and restive, and as fond of the good things of life as he was of musty books. Among his peculiar tenets, which he strove to impress upon the minds of the students, was an adherence to the principles of the fathers. He would have the young honor the creeds of their ancestors, and had no confidence in the man who could cast aside the religion of his parents.

One evening the Doctor was at table where a fine roast spare-rib of pork was served, and his mouth fairly watered as he prepared to carve it; for, of all his gastronomic partialities, roast spare-rib was his favorite. He had just plunged his fork into the brown and juicy mass, and was ready with his knife, when one of the company interrupted him:

"Doctor, if you had been born and educated one of the Lord's chosen people, how, when very hungry, do you think you would have deported yourself in the presence of such a spare-rib of pork as this?"

"My dear sir," replied the Doctor, "I should have made it a very respectful bow, and said to it, as Agrippa said to St. Paul, '*Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*'"

And he went on with his carving. C.

AT EVENING-FALL.

BY EMMA ALICE BROWNE.

As some still Eve, sere-bearded Autumn stands
Glorious among his summer-ripened sheaves,
Crowned with the full fruition of the year;
When in the golden hush no breath or breeze
Ripples the quiet of the sea, or stirs
The glowing picture of the painted woods,
While in unclouded skies the large full moon
Hangs white and luminous, as the mighty shield
Of God's Archangel, guarding the young Night.
So stands the aged Christian, clothed serene
With the sweet peace that cometh after toil,
The silver harvest of his fruitful years
Crowning the honorable furrows of his brow
With solemn lustre.
Lo, his withered hands
Are weary grown at last; his goodly works
Have yielded him tenfold of righteous gain,
For long about the Master's pleasant fields
He with a patient industry hath gone,
Plucking the tares from out the golden grain,
And propping here and there some humble flower
The world hath set her heedless foot upon.
And now the good old man, at evening-fall,
And in the perfect Autumn of his years,
Foldeth the mantle of God's endless rest
About his face, and gladly lying down,
Bids Time good-night, and calmly greeting Death
As a dear friend, long waited, come at last,
Turns from the world, its toilsome cares forgotten,
And in the long sweet slumber of the grave
Renews the glory of immortal youth.

FAITHFUL LOVE'S REWARD.

BY MRS. A. E. BARR.

Under the shadow of a great fig-tree a young girl sat, in a deep reverie. Such a tender light was in her eyes, such a sweet smile of full satisfaction on her face, that a stranger would certainly have said, "She is thinking of her lover." But no lover had Mabel Rae, and her pleasure sprung from a far less dangerous source—from the handful of tuberoses in her lap. Their spiritual, dreamy beauty and rare, rich perfume always held her as in a spell of measureless content. To breathe their odor was to fill her soul with holy and tender thoughts, and the lovely waxen flowers, pale, pure and white as moonshine, haunted her heart and imagination, and received from her a perpetual love and worship.

There she sat until the heat and stillness of the tropic noon drove her to the house, a grand old home hid among giant live-oaks gray with the solemn waving southern moss. She went first to the large dim parlors, intending to put her favorites among the damp moss of the hanging baskets; but the dreamy languor of the darkened room overcame every desire but that of sleep, and she lay down on the nearest couch, holding her flowers in her hands.

Half an hour later, Mr. Rae opened the door and ushered in a gentleman who had accompanied him from New Orleans.

"Sit down, Allan," he said. "I will soon arouse the house. You see it is the hour for siesta, and I believe all take it at the same time when I am away."

For a few minutes the young man believed himself alone. The subtle, powerful perfume—quite unknown, but delicious beyond expression—was his first sensation. Then, as his eyes became accustomed to the dim light of the carefully closed jalousies, he saw a picture that he never more forgot—a most lovely girl, in the first bloom of maidenhood, fast asleep on the silken cushions piled on a low divan. Her white robes made a kind of glory in the darkened corner. One hand had fallen down, and the flowers gemmed the carpet at her side; the other lay across her breast, as if embracing the tuberoses which it had scattered there.

Never in all his native mountains, never in any dream of love or fancy, had Allan Monteith seen a woman half so fair. Almost entranced, he stood gazing on Mabel as if he had "seen a vision." There lay his destiny asleep; he knew it, and opened his whole soul to welcome "Love's young dream." But when Mr. Rae, followed by a negro valet, returned, and Mabel languidly opened her great pensive eyes, and stretched out her arms for her father's embrace, Allan almost thought he should faint from excess of emotion, and it was with difficulty he controlled himself to receive the introduction and apologies necessary.

Allan Monteith was a young Scotchman, the only son of a gentleman with whom in early life Mr. Rae had formed a most ardent friendship. Allan was rich, and by nature and birth equally noble; but he was utterly devoid as yet of any experiences but such as his college and his mountain home had brought him. Nevertheless, he was not destitute of the traditional business capacity of his house, as some late transactions in cotton and sugar in New Orleans had proven to Mr. Rae. And partly because he liked the young man, and partly as a matter of interest, he had invited him to his home among the woods and lagoons of the Evergreen bayou. Mabel, in this transaction, had scarcely been properly considered; but to her father she was yet a child. True, he recognized her wonderful beauty, and was very proud of it; he knew too that she possessed an exquisite voice and great skill in music, and the passing idea of showing his pearl of price to the foreigner rather flattered his vanity than alarmed his fears. He did not dream that he was introducing a new claimant for its possession.

Yet so it proved. Allan lingered as if in an enchanted castle, till he had no life, no will, no hopes but those which centred in Mabel Rae. And she, innocent and impressible, soon returned his passion with a love even more absorbing and far less selfish than her lover's.

Oh the sweet, warm, love-laden days in those solemnly shaded woods! Oh the blissful hours in the cool evenings, when the perfume of tuberoses and jasmine and oleanders filled the air! when the soft calm moonlight glorified every lovely and every common thing. It was like a dream of those days when the old rustic gods reigned, and to live was to love, and to love was to be happy.

With the fall, however, there came imperative letters from Scotland, and Allan could no longer delay. Love has its business as well as its romance, and this side was not so satisfactory. Mr. Rae would hear of no engagement for two years, by which time he said he hoped to be able to give Mabel such a fortune as would make her acceptable in the eyes of Allan's father. But for the present he absolutely declined to look upon the young people's attachment as binding on either side.

"In less than two years, when the first tuberoses bloom, I will be here again, Mabel, darling!" were Allan's last whispered words, as he held her tenderly in his arms, and kissed again and again the face dearer than all the world to him. And Mabel smiled through her tears, and held the last tuberose of the summer to his lips for a parting pledge.

But the two years brought many and unexpected changes. That very winter the first war cloud gathered, and long before Allan could redeem his promise, the little inland plantation was desolate and deserted. Mr. Rae had gone to the war, and Mabel boarded in a ladies' school in New Orleans. These were but the beginning of sorrows. Another year found her an orphan, and cruelly embarrassed in money affairs. Claimants without number appeared against the Rae estate, and creditors forced the plantation into the market at the most unfavorable time. She was driven from her home, in strict accordance with the letter of the law, but she felt and knew, though powerless to prevent it, that she had been shamefully wronged.

Poverty is a grand teacher however, and has many learned disciples, and now, for the first time in all her life, Mabel thought for herself and dared to look the future in the face. She had promised her father never to write to Allan without his permission, but she considered that death annuls all contracts, and surely now, if ever, it was Allan's duty to befriend and care for her. So she sent him word in a few shy, timid sentences, of her sorrow and loneliness. But it was doubtful if ever the letter would reach him; mails in those days were not certainties; and even if it did reach Allan, it was still more uncertain whether he could reach Mabel.

And in the mean time she must work or starve—a blessed alternative in great sorrows, I say. People who have to fight "a sea of troubles" do not go mad. *Work*, the oldest of all preached evangels, is the consoler, and brings them through. And though Mabel Rae could command no higher position than that of a nursery governess, yet she found in it a higher life than ever the dreamy, luxurious selfishness of her father's home had given her.

Her employers were of the ordinary class. I can weave no romance out of them. They felt no special interest in Mabel, neither did they ill use her. She was useful and unobtrusive, and asked neither for sympathy nor attention. No letter came from Allan Monteith, though she waited and hoped with failing heart and paling cheeks for more than a year. She had not the courage to write again, and her anxiety and distress began to tell very perceptibly on a naturally frail constitution. Then a physician advised her to try at once a more invigorating climate, and she not unwillingly agreed to accompany the invalid wife of an officer returning to her home in New York.

This was the dawn of a brighter day for Mabel. She found friends even if she did not find health, and her rare beauty and wonderful musical talents soon procured her the admiration of a large and influential circle. By the advice of her friend, she established herself in a fashionable locality and commenced the teaching of music. I think few women could have been more successful. Part of this was undoubtedly due to the social power of her friend; but neither this nor her own loveliness and winning manners would have been sufficient, without the genuine knowledge of her art and that wonderful voice which charmed all who heard it.

So, in the second winter of Mabel's residence in New York, it became "the thing" to invite Miss Rae to preside over select social and musical entertainments. I have a friend who met her during this season frequently, and who describes her tact and influence as something extraordinary and magnetic. Her rare beauty was undiminished, though more thoughtful and *spirituel* in character; her dress was uniformly the same—a pale pink lustreless silk, with tuberoses in her hair and at her breast, for her passion for these flowers was stronger than ever; and when they were to be procured, at any trouble or cost, her little room was always full of their peculiar fragrance.

During this winter Mabel had many lovers, and report said, more than one excellent offer of marriage, but she quietly ignored or else decidedly refused all advances. Her heart was still with the tall, fair mountaineer who had won it, amid the warmth and perfume of tropic noons and moonlit nights; and though twice two years had passed, she refused to believe him false.

And she was right. Allan deserved her fullest faith. Her letter had never reached him, and yet he had with incredible difficulty made his way to New Orleans, only to find the Rae plantation in the hands of strangers, his friend dead, and Mabel gone, none knew whither. After a long and dispiriting search, he left Mabel's discovery in the hands of well-paid agents, and returned to Scotland almost broken-hearted at the destruction of all his hopes.

But he still loved her passionately, and often in stormy nights, when the winds tossed the tall pines like straws, and mountain snows beat at barred doors and windows, he thought of the happy peace and the solemn silences in which he and his love had walked, listening only to the beating of their own hearts, or the passionate undernotes of the mocking-birds. Often, both in sleeping and waking dreams, he saw again that dim parlor, and the beautiful girl sleeping on the silken couch; and with these memories there always came the same sensation of some delicate perfume in the air. Far away amid the heather and the broom, and the strong fresh breezes of the North Sea, he still was visited by the breath of the tropic woods, and the fragrance of the tuberose and the memory of his lost Mabel were one and indivisible in his heart.

Thus two walked apart who should have walked hand in hand, and it seemed as if the years only widened that breach over which two souls looked longingly and called vainly. But there are ills which happen for good; and I think any one who would have taken the trouble to analyze the gain in character which this separation and struggle produced, would have said so.

For after five years of battle with life, Mabel was no longer a lovely, impulsive, thoughtless child; she was a noble woman, beautiful in all the majesty of completed suffering. And Allan's whole nature had swelled under the influence of a mighty and unselfish love, as seas swell under the influence of the sun and moon.

If we wait, however, the harvest of the heart *will come.* One day early in the winter, Mabel got a note from a friend, announcing her return from abroad, and begging her to be present at a small informal reunion at her house that evening. She went early in the day, and spent the afternoon in that pleasant gossip which young and happy women enjoy. Her hostess rallied her a good deal upon her growing years, and laughingly advised her to secure a young Scotchman with whom they had had a pleasant acquaintance in their travels, and who was now in New York and going to spend the evening with them.

Did Fate knock softly on Mabel's soul then? For she blushed violently, and instantly, as if by magic, there sprung up in her heart a happy refrain which she could not control, and which kept on singing, "*He comes! he comes! My lover comes!*"

She dressed with more than ordinary care, and was so impatient that her toilet was completed before others had begun. So she sat down in the unlighted parlors, saying to herself:

"I must be still. I will be calm; for how should I bear a disappointment, and what ground of hope have I? Absolutely none but that he comes from the same country. *No, there is no hope!*"

But still, above the doubt and fear, she could hear the same chiming undertone, "*He comes! he comes! My lover comes!*"

She became nervous and superstitious, and when the silence was broken by a quick ring and a rapid footstep, she rose involuntarily from her chair, and stood trembling and flushing with excitement in the middle of the room. Ah, Mabel! Mabel! your heart has seen further than your eyes. *Allan has come at last.*

"Ah, my darling! my darling! my fair, sweet flower, whose perfume has followed me o'er land and sea, I have found you again at last!" exclaimed Allan, as he clasped Mabel to his bosom.

And so Mabel's winter of discontent and sorrow was over. Never more did she have grief or pain unsoothed or uncomforted. I only wish I could close as the old fairy tales do, and say, "So they lived happy ever afterward." But, alas! though a lovely Mabel Monteith, with her father's hair and her mother's eyes, makes light and gladness in Allan's home, the far dearer one has gone "to the abodes where the eternal are."

In a little country church-yard not twenty miles from New York, the beautiful Mabel Rae "sleeps the sleep that knows no waking." Half the year round you would know her grave by the delicate odor of the tuberoses with which it is covered; and even when snows cover it, and wild winds and rains beat over its senseless turf, one noble heart offers there still the incense of an undying affection.

For be sure that a *true love* "strikes but *one* hour," and he or she has never loved at all who can say, I loved *once*. Was Mabel's short life a lost one? Oh no! Life is perfect in small measures, and she left upon the mountain tops of death a light that makes them lovely to those who shall follow her.

WIT AND HUMOR.

A LADY in New Orleans was recently questioning her little daughter in geography, and said, "Daisy, who first went through the Straits of Magellan?" Daisy quickly answered, "Magellan and his squadron." "What do you understand by his squadron?" The question was not in the book, but Daisy didn't hesitate. "One of those women who are not quite white," she triumphantly answered, evidently having the idea of a quadroon in her mind.

A NEGRO held a cow while a cross-eyed man was to knock her on the head with an ax. Observing the man's eyes, the negro anxiously inquired, "Is you gwine to strike where you looks?" "Yes," replied the man. "Den," said the negro, "you jus' hole dis critter's head yerself, for I an't a gwine to let you hit *me!*"

THERE is a man in Portland, Maine, who supports his family in handsome style by simply tying an able-bodied cat by the tail to a clothes-line every night, and then going out in the morning to collect the soap, shaving cups, brushes, etc., thrown into the yard by angry boarders in adjoining houses.

A WIFE asked her husband for a new dress. He replied, "Times are hard, my dear—so hard I can hardly keep my nose above water;" whereupon she retorted, "You could keep your nose above water easy enough if you'd a mind to, but the trouble is that you keep it too much above brandy."

THE most polished man in Brooklyn just now is a dry goods merchant whose wife undertook to bathe him all over with balsam for the rheumatism. After the job was well done, she looked at the label of the bottle and found it was furniture polish she had been using.

A GOOD-NATURED man having been carried, while asleep in a railroad car, a long way beyond his destination, on being awaked, remarked to a fellow-passenger, "Pretty good joke, this, isn't it?" "Yes," was the reply, "but rather far-fetched."

"Do bats ever fly in the daytime?" asked a teacher of his class in Natural History. "Yes, sir," the boys replied. "What kind of bats?" asked the astonished teacher. "Brick-bats," yelled the boys.

"ARE passengers often lost on these boats?" asked a timid female of a deck hand on a Jersey ferry-boat. "No, ma'am," was his consoling reply; "we 'most always find the bodies by dragging the river."

AN Ohio baggage smasher was knocked down by lightning the other day, but never let go the trunk he was operating on, and upon coming to his senses, proceeded with the work of destruction.

AN editor in Arkansas says, "If we have offended anybody in the course of our short but brilliant career, let him send us in a new pair of boots and say nothing about it."

A CLOCK in a factory in Harlem was expelled from the premises the other day by the request of the workingmen, because it had not struck for eight hours.

A DRUNKARD, on being told that the earth is round and turns on its axis all the time, said, "I believe that, for I've never been able to stand on the darned thing."

A CAREFUL observer has noticed that young ladies with new solitaire diamond rings never require much urging to play the piano.

A CHATTANOOGA chicken-coop has the following sign on it: "For sail—Chickens in the blume of yuth."

OLD maids, it is said, are seldom found in China, but rare old china is often found among old maids.

IF speech is silver, and if silence is gold, how much is a deaf and dumb man worth?

IF a toper and a quart of whisky were left together, which would be drunk first?

WHAT ship is it that has two mates and no captain? Courtship.

THE woman question *par excellence* is the question of age.

THE *only thing that can live in fire* is a live coal.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A COLORED man named Gifford, in Utica, last week was told to sweep off the bed-plate of a buzz saw in a sash factory, which was running at a high rate of speed. Instead of taking a broom, he leaned over the saw at right angles to it, with the intention of blowing away the dust. Unconsciously stooping too low, the keen saw cut deeply into his left breast. The operatives standing near witnessed the accident, and immediately took hold of Gifford and led him from the room. Singular to relate, he did not know he was injured until he saw the blood; then he became faint. The wound was six or eight inches long, and the left lung was cut. The heart escaped by only half an inch. The chances are against him, but he may recover.

THE Cleveland *Plaindealer* tells a strange story of an explosion in a boy's pocket. He was riding on horseback, when a powder-horn in his pantaloons' pocket, containing a few cents' worth of blasting powder, exploded. The boy seems to have been a combustibly inclined youth, for several matches in the same pocket took fire, his clothing was all burned, and his leg so injured, from the knee upward, that it seemed as though lacerated with hot pincers. The little fellow begged them to kill him while his wounds were being dressed. His recovery is considered extremely doubtful.

A SINGULAR accident occurred to a man living in Salem, Mass. He was awakened in the night by a choking sensation, and found that he had half swallowed his set of false teeth. All efforts to dislodge them from their position were unavailing, they being firmly wedged in the windpipe. A doctor was called, who did all in his power to relieve the unfortunate man, but after working for an hour it was found impossible to remove the teeth without cutting them, which was accordingly done, and the man is now in a way of recovery.

LAST week a man and his wife, living at Mount Union, Ohio, left their children at home alone. While the parents were absent, their boy, about twelve years old, took a gun and threatened to shoot his sister, who is younger than he. She ran into another room, and he called after her, saying that if she ran away he would shoot the baby, which he did. The baby was a little girl, eighteen months old, and the ball passed through her temple as she lay asleep on the bed, killing her instantly.

AN inexplicable murder was recently committed in the little town of Winetka, on the outskirts of Chicago. A respectable farmer, named Kean Higgins, sixty-two years of age, was pounded to death on his way to church. The small amount of money which he had on his person was untouched, and he is not known to have had an enemy who could have a motive for such a deed.

THERE is a Russian at Old Orchard Beach whose fondness for the sea and everything connected with it is eccentric to the verge of mania. He drinks two or three gallons, it is said, of seawater daily, eats sea-weed by the handful, and bathes four or five times a day. He is very healthy and robust, fat as a seal, and has a round, red, jocund face.

A YOUNG man who was hunting turkeys at Kalamazoo, Mich., thought he saw one in the grass, and fired. It turned out that what he saw was the head of the farmer that owned the place, who was taking a nap in his meadow. Unfortunately the hunter's marksmanship was good, and the farmer was killed.

AN English swimmer, named Johnson, lately tried to swim across the English channel, a distance of twenty-six miles, but the attempt resulted in an ignominious failure. Before he had accomplished seven miles, his legs were numbed, and he was threatened with cramps, and had to give up.

A STREET gymnast of Paris, known as Samson's Iron Jaw, whose specialty was to pick up weights with his teeth and throw them over his head, raised a barrel with his teeth, and in attempting to dispose of it in the same way, fell dead, with a broken spine.

A FRENCH gentleman who had rescued from drowning a boy that had fallen in the Seine, near Paris, was requested by the lad's father to swim out for his son's cap, as he was already wet though.

A CHILD, four years old, fell overboard from the wharf at Newport on Saturday of last week, and was rescued by a courageous woman, who jumped into the dock after him.

A COURT in England has recently decided that the presence of ghosts in a house is a sufficient reason for annulling the contract between landlord and tenant.

THE recent comet occasioned the death of one man in Illinois. He got up to look at it, fell down stairs, and was fatally injured.

"OUR SET."

BY LOUISE S. UPHAM.

Whose is the edict that bids the proud waves
Of Society's grandeur be stayed?
"Thus far shalt thou go, and no further!" Who marks
Where the boundary lines shall be made?

And what is the passport that throws wide the door
Of the "Marble" and "Brown-stone" to-day?
What the robe every guest is expected to don,
Who within the charmed circle would stray?

We were taught in our youth, "No lords in our land,
But everywhere man is man's peer!
All are born free and equal: we neither bend knee
Nor lift cap to proud coronets here!"

Yet Society's glasses are quick set astride
Her nose, in a quizzical way,
If over the barriers set up by "Our Set,"
An adventurous parvenu stray!

"What's the length of her train? Her chignon, how high?
How old are the laces? the jewels, how new?
Not the requisite legion of flounces and frills!
Au revoir!—She never will do!"

So these butterfly carpers flit gayly around,
Scorning modest and humble array;
For, though "blood always tells," the form it assumes
Must be decked with the ruling display.

Though the figure be graceful and light as a fawn's,
And the face than Hebe's more fair,
Yet diamonds and satins are wonderful aids
To the vision, these critics declare.

Nor can Fashion alone, in her pride, hold the key,
'Till with Gold she has been duly wed;
Then opens the door that admits to "Our Set,"
Where, for aye, she may toss her proud head.

A BONE of CONTENTION;

—OR—

The Waldemar Succession.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAMPTON MYSTERY," "THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME," "THE LADY OF KILDARE," "THE OLD LIFE'S SHADOWS," "A DARING GAME," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SEVERAL INTERESTS CONVERGING.

The hour was growing late when Lord Waldemar returned home from Lady Thaxter's residence, with Miss Floyd and Mrs. Watchley. The stern old Baron was very silent and abstracted, but he ran up his house steps with a vigor and lightness he had not shown for years, and when he halted in the hall to remove his greatcoat there was seen to be a light in his keen black eyes such as no one now living had ever seen in them.

Miss Floyd passed into the drawing-room, which was brightly lighted and glowing with warmth. Upon crossing the threshold, she uttered an exclamation which caused Mrs. Watchley to hasten after her, and Lord Waldemar followed them.

Mr. Darrel Moer had been gracefully reclining upon a sofa at the moment of Miss Floyd's entrance, but he had arisen immediately, and was now exchanging greetings with the ladies, holding the hand of the heiress in his, and pressing it with the warmth of a lover.

"So you have followed us to town, Darrel?" said Lord Waldemar, with an easy nod. "I expected you up before this. How goes your business in Lancashire?"

"Oh, I had no business there, beyond seeing Carrington, my lord," replied Moer. "He is nearly recovered from his illness. That is, the crisis is past, and his physician declares him out of danger," amended Moer. "He sat up to-day for the first time within a fortnight. He depends upon me to amuse him, and I shall have to run up to see him again soon, probably."

"Indeed!" said Lord Waldemar, with a cynical smile. "You and Carrington are modern Damon and Pythias. I am delighted to hear that Carrington is so much better. Yet he looked ruddy and round as usual when I saw him in Rotten Row to-day, upon a prancing, curveting horse, the admiration of the ladies and the despair of the gentlemen. He must have preceded you to town by some hours—poor interesting invalid!"

Darrel Moer seemed for a moment completely overwhelmed.

To say truth, he had not seen Carrington since the day of the fatal marriage, but he supposed him to be at Lynshire Place. He—Moer—had been to Southport in search of young Honor Glint, and had made a flying trip to Bolton and to the Red House, where he had seen Mrs. Glint and Miss Milner, but obtained no information whatever concerning the whereabouts of his young bride. He had then returned to Southport, and had managed to extract from Miss Brown of Oak Cottage the fact, which she had chosen at first to withhold, that Honor had gone up to London with Sir Hugh Tregaron and a strange lady, who had come in a cab and taken Honor with her to the station.

Upon this information, Moer and his valet had come to London, arriving this very evening, and coming directly to Lord Waldemar's house in Park Lane.

"Ah, yes," Darrel Moer struggled to say, after a brief and awkward silence, in response to his uncle's nearly annihilating remark. "You saw George Carrington, I suppose, my lord. He is in town. But I referred to his cousin, Albert Carrington, you know."

As there was an Albert Carrington, a chronic invalid, who had his home at Lynshire Place, this explanation was not questioned.

"Have you been to the opera this evening, Miss Hilda?" inquired Moer, not giving the Baron time to reply, if he had so desired, to the last remark.

"No," said Miss Floyd, languidly drawing off her gloves. "We dined with Lady Thaxter; merely an informal dinner, but remained rather late."

Darrel Moer was interested. It flashed upon his memory that Lady Thaxter was the aunt of Sir Hugh Tregaron.

"Was there a large company?" he inquired.

"Oh, no; merely ourselves," answered Miss Floyd, "and some resident guests of Lady Thaxter. First and foremost was a Hungarian Countess, a lady Rothsmere, who wore diamonds of immense size, and a gown that must certainly have been made in Paris. She was the most striking looking lady I ever saw."

Lord Waldemar's bronzed face flushed, and he walked toward the fire and leaned one arm upon the low marble mantel-piece.

"And who else was present?" inquired Moer.

"Her ladyship's nephew, a Baronet, very handsome, but very grave also, named Sir Hugh Tregaron. He was polite; I dare say he could not be otherwise; but he had a preoccupied manner that was not very flattering to me," said Miss Floyd. "There was a third permanent guest at the Thaxter house, a young lady of my own age, a Miss Glint; that was all."

Darrel Moer started violently. He had not thought that Sir Hugh Tregaron would have taken Honor to the house of Lady Thaxter, but he now wondered that the idea had not occurred to him. The young Cornish Baronet would naturally have placed Honor under the protection of his noble relative, where she would be safe from Moer, and sheltered from even the breath of calumny.

His sudden excitement was not unmarked.

"Miss Glint is from Lancashire," said Lord Waldemar, regarding his nephew keenly. "Have you ever met her, Darrel?"

"Never!" responded Moer, with unnecessary vehemence. "I never even heard her name. Glint? Glint? It is not common."

The Baron was not entirely satisfied, but he did not choose to declare his suspicions that his nephew was not frank with him.

Mrs. Watchley and Miss Floyd discussed their hostess, the Hungarian Countess, Miss Glint and the dinner with considerable freedom. Lord Waldemar excused himself, and withdrew to his library.

Mrs. Watchley looked after the Baron with a smile, and said, as he closed the door:

"I am not sure, Mr. Moer, that his lordship will not cheat Miss Floyd in her turn out of the Waldemar succession. If he were to contract a second marriage, and a son should be born to him, Hilda would be left out in the cold, as you now are."

Darrel Moer laughed lightly.

"Your suggestion is more absurd than the jokes in this week's *Punch*," he said. "My uncle is sixty-eight years old, although he is so vigorous and hale, and seems so much younger. He is too old to marry. And besides, he worships the memory of his wife, who died young, and who was one of those tender, clinging women that stern men such as he adore. Marry again! Mrs. Watchley, you do not know Lord Waldemar."

"I am inclined to think that it is you who do not know him, Mr. Moer," declared Mrs. Watchley seriously. "Men who are older than Lord Waldemar marry, and why should not he? He admires this beautiful Hungarian Countess, and has fallen dead in love with her. His glances followed her everywhere. When she went to the conservatory with Hilda, he was uneasy and distracted during her absence. When she returned, he brightened up as if the sun had suddenly shone upon him. He may worship the memory of his dead wife, Mr. Moer, but he is beginning to worship this living lady. He talked politics to her, society gossip, and he even talked of himself, and that is an unusual subject with him. Lady Rothsmere can become Lady Waldemar any day she likes."

The earnestness of Mrs. Watchley impressed Moer. His brow contracted after an unusual fashion.

"Who is this Hungarian Countess?" he asked.

"A lady some thirty years old, the widow of a Hungarian Count. Her wealth is almost fabulous. She has an estate which resembles a principality. Lady Thaxter visited her in Hungary last year, and found her living in regal state."

"I have heard of the statesman, Count Rothsmere," said Moer thoughtfully. "He was a power in his day. He died two years ago, or thereabouts, at an advanced age, and left a beautiful young wife, I have heard. And this lady is his widow. She won't marry Lord Waldemar, you may depend upon it. The Hungarian Countess of Rothsmere can marry a German prince, if she likes. She would never marry an English baron."

"Did you ever see her, Mr. Moer?" asked Miss Floyd.

Darrel Moer's face flushed strangely.

"I—I saw her once," he said, with a singular hesitation. "It was at Baden-Baden some years ago. She was the great lady of the place, the 'bright particular star' to which all did homage."

He hastened to change the subject, as if it were unpleasant to him.

Mrs. Watchley did not take part in the conversation that followed, and presently dozed in her chair.

Darrel Moer seized upon the opportunity thus presented to approach nearer to Miss Floyd, who had laid aside her wrappings and was looking very pretty in her evening dress.

"Hilda," he said, with a well-counterfeited passion, having in reality not the faintest glimmering of love for her, "I carried your image with me to Lancashire, photographed upon my heart. I hasten back to you from the bedside of my friend to lay again my heart at your feet. You promised to consider my suit. You have not known me long, but I know that our natures are similar, and that I can make you happy. Give me my answer to-night. Say that you will marry me."

"You are anxious that I should accept you before seeing any one else," remarked Miss Floyd coarsely, and with evident dissatisfaction. "One doesn't want to be urged into a marriage. As the heiress of Waldemar, I can marry whom I please. A glance, a word, would have brought Sir Hugh Tregaron to my feet to-night. I should like to hold a small court around me whenever I enter society; I should like to refuse a score of suitors, and here you ask me to bind myself to you."

"A marriage between you and me would consolidate the Waldemar and Floyd interests," said Moer. "My uncle will leave me heir to all his freehold property, all his money in bank, all his personal estate. It would simplify matters if we were to join our interests in one."

He knew very well that Lord Waldemar had done all for him that he would ever do; that not one penny of his lordship's property would be left to him at the Baron's death. His interests urged him to hasten on his marriage with the heiress. She, spurred by the secret knowledge of her false position of Lord Waldemar's heiress, yet half averse to Moer, and longing for social triumphs as belle and coquette, was yet forced to accept him, and so connect her interests with his.

In default of a lawful heir or heiress in the direct line of descent from Lord Waldemar, Darrel Moer would stand first in the line of succession, and was therefore a safe match for Miss Floyd.

"Speak, my own love," urged Moer, as she hesitated.

"Yes, then," said Miss Floyd, rather ungraciously.

"You will marry me, Hilda?" asked Moer, it must be confessed, with some astonishment, despite his remarkable vanity.

"Yes," again assented Miss Floyd. "There, don't ruffle my bertha, Darrel. That lace is priceless. I suppose we are betrothed, but there's no use in going into ecstasies over it. I never could bear to have any one rubbing their lips against my face. There's no sense in it."

Darrel Moer refrained from kissing her, but he pressed her hand, and placed upon her finger a betrothal ring, which had served him a score of times before, and in this manner the pair so well worthy of each other were betrothed.

"I shall speak to my uncle to-morrow," said Moer, in a glow of exultation. "You have made me very happy, Hilda."

"Grandpapa says I am not to go into society this winter," said Miss Floyd discontentedly. "He means to procure governesses and masters for me, and make a school-girl of me. I won't submit to such treatment."

"You won't be obliged to submit to it, if you will marry me immediately," cried Moer, eager to secure his prize. "As my wife, you can enter society at once, be presented to the Queen, give parties, and become a belle. As my wife, you will be courted and feted and sung about. I shall leave you an absolute freedom of action, and shall live only to carry out your wishes."

This halcyon view enchanted Miss Floyd. Marriage with Darrell Moer was from that moment, in her eyes, a gate through which she would enter the gay world for which she sighed.

"Very well," she declared, as if the compact were of the most ordinary description. "I'll marry you when you like on those conditions. Marriage for me means freedom. Mrs. Watchley," she added, arousing her companion, "I have promised to marry Mr. Moer. It's all settled, and we are to be married immediately, if grandpapa consents."

Mrs. Watchley started up broad awake, her gold-mounted eye-glasses slipping from her hooked nose, her eyes full of a triumphant expression.

"I am very much pleased—very much pleased indeed," she exclaimed heartily. "Mr. Moer, I love my dear Hilda as if she were my own child, and I take a mother's pride and pleasure in giving her to you. She is a tender plant, one of those rare flowers of existence which need to be cherished and guarded. You are my lord's own nephew, his sister's son, and have grown up at Floyd Manor under my lord's own eyes as it were, until your manhood. I am sure I could not have found a better husband for my dear Hilda, although her birth and beauty might win for her a ducal coronet. I hope and believe you will both be happy."

"I don't doubt it, madam," said Darrel Moer, bowing.

"Lord Waldemar must be told to-morrow," said Mrs. Watchley, in a tone of decision. "And our Hilda shall be a bride and enter society this very season. No musty books for you now, my dear; no music-masters; no teachers of deportment. I congratulate you upon your emancipation."

It would be difficult to tell which of the three was best pleased with the projected marriage. Each had secret motives urging them to hasten on the wedding-day. They lingered in the drawing-room a full hour longer, and then separated for the night.

The thoughts of each were characteristic, as they entered their several rooms.

"Hilda is provided for now, let what will happen," Mrs. Watchley said to herself, as she locked her door and proceeded to disrobe. "The real heiress of Waldemar is dead, or living somewhere in obscurity where she will never be found. Darrel Moer is next heir, and, in any case now, Hilda is sure to be lady of Waldemar. Grimrod will be delighted. I'll telegraph him secretly to-morrow morning, and he will be here to-morrow night. If Lord Waldemar should refuse to sanction the match, Grimrod will know what next to do."

The reflections of Hilda Floyd ran in a somewhat similar groove, as she submitted her fawn-colored hair to the manipulations of her sleepy maid.

"I shall make all sure by marrying Darrel Moer," she said to herself. "Once his wife, I shall be lady of Waldemar, whatever happen. Of course there's no real heiress living, and if there were, she's probably sunk in peasant obscurity. She's the same as dead. I shall wear the Waldemar diamonds, shine in society, and be rid of the restrictions Lord Waldemar desires to place upon me. And once I am Darrel Moer's wife, I can defy Grimrod and Mrs. Watchley. I'll turn them both away, as sure as I live. It's true Grimrod holds those wretched letters of mine to Antonio Frivoli, but I can subdue him if he attempts to govern me by means of them. My marriage to Darrel Moer means, sooner or later, the dismissal of Grimrod and Mrs. Watchley."

She set her lips together in grim determination.

Darrel Moer's musings were tinged with perplexity.

"Something has changed the pretty heiress since I first proposed to her," he thought. "Can she have fallen in love with me? No. Is she anxious to marry me because I can give her freedom? Perhaps. I should think so, if I did not know that under all her seeming shallowness she is really deep and artful and far-seeing. What's her game? Whatever it is, I'll take advantage of it, and marry her either with or without Lord Waldemar's consent. Marriage with Hilda Floyd will be a paying speculation for me!"

He opened his door and passed into his room. His valet Bing arose from a couch on which he had been reclining while waiting for his master.

"You can sit down again, Bing," said Moer, closing and locking the door. "I have something important to say to you."

CHAPTER XXX.

A STORM GATHERING.

Darrel Moer's valet resumed his seat and his easy, reclining attitude. His master flung himself into an easy chair. The gas-light burned brightly; the fire was aglow. A decanter of brandy, with glasses, was upon the table, in company with a jar of Turkish tobacco and a couple of ruby-colored meerschaums. Darrel Moer was wont to gratify his appetites, and here was full material for such gratification.

"Shall I light your pipe, sir?" asked Bing, as Moer's glances rested upon the table and its contents.

"No. I've got serious business on hand," replied Moer, contracting his brows. "You see in me, Bing, a man who stands at last upon the threshold of success. When I was the supposed heir of Lord Waldemar, I was never sure in my soul that I would one day be Baron Waldemar. There was always a secret misgiving within me that my cousin would turn up, or that he would leave a son to oust me. It was, after the first shock, a relief to me that the blow had at last fallen, and that Miss Floyd had put in her claims and been declared my uncle's heiress. She's a pretty girl, and the man who gets her will be lucky. I am to be that favored individual, Bing. Miss Floyd has promised to become my wife."

Bing expressed his delight in suitable terms—with emphasis even, for his employer's prosperity was his own.

"I knew you'd win her, sir," he exclaimed. "Somehow the ladies can't resist you, Mr. Moer. When is the marriage to take place?"

"Immediately. Within a month."

"But suppose my lord should object to it?"

"Then I'll marry her by stealth, or run away with her."

"There's a lover for you!" cried Bing admiringly, apostrophizing space. "Then you're sure of Waldemar, and the Manor, and the rent-rolls, and the bank accounts, and all the rest of them—if only Miss Glint don't turn up, or some of her friends interfere. That Sir Hugh Tregaron's a regular lion. I'm afraid he'll show fight."

"My marriage to Miss Floyd will have to be secret, that's sure. Honor has probably blown the whole story to her friends. Sir Hugh would deem it his duty to prevent another marriage on my part before this one is annulled. It's a mercy he hasn't told the whole thing to Lord Waldemar already. They are old friends, and quite intimate. My uncle thinks Sir Hugh a very pattern of chivalry, and all because Sir Hugh's father was his college chum, and played Pythias to his Damon. But so far I am secure. Lord Waldemar does not know the truth yet, and I must move before he finds out."

"If we could only find Miss Glint, that would be a great step gained," said Bing. "So long as she is in the dark somewhere, we have cause to fear."

"Miss Glint is found. She is visiting here in Park Lane, not far from this very house—in fact, at the house of Sir Hugh Tregaron's aunt, Lady Thaxter. She's there in clover, lying off, I suppose, to watch my movements."

"That is bad," muttered Bing, shaking his head. "She has found powerful friends, and has only to open her mouth to blow down all your fine air castles, with your bride and your fortune in them. What is to be done?"

Moer's lips wreathed themselves in a strange smile.

"It is perfectly evident what is to be done," he replied. "The girl is in my way. She has got the certificate of my marriage to her in her pocket. She has only to produce it to cause my expulsion from my uncle's house, and to rob me of my rich bride. She is an obstacle in my path. What do we do with obstacles?"

"Remove them. But how are we to remove a young lady who is sheltered in one of the grandest houses in London, is watched over by a noble lady, and guarded by Sir Hugh Tregaron, with a host of servants at his beck and call? The thing is impossible."

"Not so, my good Bing. Set your clever wits to work," said Darrel Moer. "The problem is already stated. How to get the girl out of Lady Thaxter's house—that's the gist of the thing. I might write her a note, asking her to meet me somewhere," he said musingly, "and I could tell her I purposed to release her in some way, or get up some plausible excuse that doesn't occur to me now, but which would be sure to bring her. She'd come to me, I dare say—though she might not; but if she did, she'd bring Sir Hugh Tregaron and Lady Thaxter with her. She won't easily be hoodwinked, and her friends will watch against every possible ruse. Bing, you shall have a share in my prosperity. Help me to win it. Set your shrewd wits to work, as I said before, to devise a plan to get the girl out of the Thaxter house—out of London!"

Bing applied himself to the problem in a dead earnest.

Darrel Moer puzzled himself over the question, knotting his narrow brows.

Suddenly Bing started, an evil gleam lighting up his face.

"I have it!" he exclaimed. "But first tell me something of Miss Glint's disposition. Is she revengeful?"

"No; she is too merciful to be always just," replied Moer, wondering. "I dare say she hates me most cordially, and would be glad to hear of my death, but if I were dying I am sure she would minister to me. She's very near an angel, that girl, and I wish she were Lord Waldemar's heiress," and he sighed.

"If she were to hear that Mrs. Glint was dying, and longed to see her before she dissolved, do you think she would go to Bolton?" inquired Bing.

"Certainly. She'd go, if she had to make the journey on her hands and knees. But Sir Hugh Tregaron would go too, and Lady Thaxter, and Mrs. Early, her ladyship's companion, and the girl's maid, that Lucky who pulled off your beard. So what good would that do?"

"I think I can manage it," said Bing reflectively. "I'll start for Bolton in the morning, and send a telegram from there the next forenoon, so that Miss Glint and her friends will arrive at Bolton about dusk. I have not perfected my plan, so I won't dwell upon it. If there's a spark of tenderness in the girl's heart, she'll come on the telegram I send her. Then I must contrive to get her in my power. Once in my hands, where shall I take her? I want a secure place in which to put her."

"You can't keep her at Bolton. Could you find some refuge for her at Manchester or Liverpool? She must be kept shut up somewhere until after my marriage to Miss Floyd, and I will then release her only upon her giving up to me that marriage certificate, and promising never to betray to any one the hand I had in secluding her for a season. If I once get hold of that certificate, the whole trouble is ended, for without that certificate the girl and all her friends can never prove my marriage to her."

"She would be found by her friends in either of the places you have named," said Bing. "We must have some spot that is secret and secluded. You said the other day at the Manor that Lord Waldemar had cut you off with two hundred a year and a wild, boggy place called the Cypresses. You said also that the house is unoccupied, although furnished, because believed to be haunted. Why would not this place be the very one we want? I have a sister whom I could send on in advance to prepare the house for occupation, and who would remain to take care of the girl. Where is the Cypresses?"

Darrel Moer hesitated an instant, changing color.

"In Huntingdonshire," he said finally, with an effort.

Bing repeated the words in dismay.

"In what part?" he asked.

"In the eastern, among the fens," replied Moer. "The Cypresses is for the most part fen."

"In the eastern part!" echoed Bing, with a curious glance at his master. "Then that is settled. You won't dare take her there?"

"Why not?" demanded Moer almost defiantly, his color rising. "Honor Glint will be too closely shut up to ever learn that Huntingdonshire contains a secret, the revelation of which would change entirely her life and mine—yes, and that of Hilda Floyd. I would have had the Cypresses located elsewhere, if I could; but there's no danger, Bing, not a particle of danger, and you are absurd to suggest such a thing. I have unfortunately a private skeleton, of which you and but one or two others suspect the existence. That skeleton happens to be in Huntingdonshire. But it is locked carefully away in a very capacious closet, and will never tumble out to my discomfiture. Besides, it's a long distance between the closet of my skeleton and the Cypresses. I looked on the map. If the girl is properly guarded—indeed, whether she is or not—she'll never get track of my secret. She shall go to the Cypresses, Bing. It's a long distance from Lancashire to Huntingdonshire, and I can't see how you'll transport the girl in such a way that she will not be tracked."

"Leave that to me," said the valet quietly. "I shall want plenty of money for my operations. I see my way plainly. I won't say more about my plans, but you will hear by the end of the week that our bird is safely caged. I'll bring you the news, along with the marriage certificate."

Moer took out his pocket-book and counted out fifty pounds, which he handed to his valet.

"I'll replenish by borrowing of Grimrod upon my intended marriage with the heiress," he said, smiling. "Grimrod will lend me any amount on an I O U with such security for payment. Very likely Sir Hugh will have detectives after the girl, so you'll have to be wary and shrewd, Bing. I don't see how you are going to manage it, but I have faith in you. You've served me in more difficult cases than this."

Bing stowed the money away on his person. The worthy pair talked an hour or two longer, and then Moer went to bed, and his valet retired to his own room.

The next morning Bing came in to assist his master to dress for breakfast, but went out soon afterward, telling the servants of the household that he was going down to Brighton to see a sister of his who was ill there.

Instead of going to Brighton, however, he took the first mail train to the northward, booking himself to Manchester, at which place he intended to stop an hour to effect a change in his personal appearance.

At an early hour of that morning also, Mrs. Watchley dispatched a carefully worded telegram to Grimrod, who still lingered in Yorkshire. It had the effect to cause him to start by the first train for London.

Darrel Moer sought an opportunity throughout the day to broach the momentous question of his desired marriage with Hilda Floyd to his uncle, but Lord Waldemar was invisible all the morning, and was busy during the early part of the afternoon in writing letters. At the usual hour of the day—that is, four o'clock—the carriage, which had been brought from Yorkshire, arrived at the door, and Lord Waldemar, Miss Floyd and Mrs. Watchley entered it and drove to Hyde Park. Moer mounted a fine thoroughbred which belonged to the Baron, and rode beside the carriage, as handsome and smiling a scoundrel as ever set foot in a stirrup.

At six o'clock the family returned home, and at seven they dined. After dinner the ladies went back to the drawing-room, and Lord Waldemar and his nephew lingered over the wine. The butler had withdrawn with his staff, and the two were quite alone.

"Are you going to the House this evening, my lord?" questioned Moer, trifling with a filbert.

"Yes, there's to be an interesting debate," said the Baron. "The Countess of Rothsmere, Lady Thaxter, Miss Glint and Tregaron will all be present. I invited Hilda to go, but she thinks she would not be able to keep awake. As it is brains and not bonnets which are to be exhibited, I suppose she would find her entertainment but a dull one."

"She's only a child, in many respects, my lord," said Moer deprecatingly, "but a very pretty one. She has a woman's love for gayety, but her life has been so secluded at Innsbruck that one cannot wonder at her longing for society. Shall you introduce her this season?"

"No," said his lordship curtly. "She is too much of a child 'in many respects' to take a woman's place yet in society. She's young enough, Darrel."

"I know it, my lord," responded Moer nervously, "but she is old enough to do a great deal of damage to a man's heart. I deemed myself invulnerable," and he laughed a little uneasily, "but I am her first victim."

Lord Waldemar arched his brows incredulously, and a cynical smile curled his lips.

"You are facetious," he remarked. "The idea is more than absurd—it is delightfully grotesque."

Moer flushed with annoyance.

"I assure you, my lord," he exclaimed, "I am in serious earnest. I have fallen in love with my cousin, and I desire to marry her. I asked her last evening if she would be my wife, and she said Yes. Having made myself certain of her sentiments, I come to you to ask your consent to my proposed marriage with Hilda."

"Then this is not some farce gotten up to entertain me?" inquired his lordship, with a faint sneer. "I thought it was. I've a poor opinion of you, Darrel, but the girl I am positive is none too good for you. You and she are kindred souls. But I do not approve your course in making love to her before she has had a chance to compare you with other men, and see if she really loves you. You are in too great haste to bag your game, Darrel. Give her a chance. If at the end of a few years she chooses to marry you, I shall not say you nay. My nephew will not be a bad match 'in many respects'—to quote your expressive phrase—for the daughter of Wallace Floyd and Janet Arlyn."

Moer was greatly encouraged by this reception of his proposal, a reception so much more favorable than he had dared to hope for. He hastened to push his suit.

"I am not so young a man as I was, my lord," he said, "and this desire of yours that we should wait is torture to me. Hilda knows her own heart, and I know mine. Why need we delay? I will be a good husband to her, and you will be relieved of her charge. You might bestow upon us a suitable income, and permit us to go away by ourselves. Or we would stay with you so long as you live, and be your own children to you."

"I've had one own child, and that will suffice," said the Baron grimly. "I have not been fortunate in my descendants. Now, Darrel, you know you don't love this girl, and that you are after her fortune. Your pretence of love is most ludicrous."

"But I affirm that I do love her, uncle; that I desire to marry her, and I beg you, in her name and my own to permit our speedy union," persisted Moer.

"It's hard to believe that you love her, although I know that 'like attracts like.' But granting that you really love her, I can't consent to the marriage under many years, Darrel. The girl is too young. She may not know her own mind. She is inexperienced and innocent; you are known as a mere man of the world. Give her time to know you as you are."

Moer doggedly reiterated his demand for Hilda's hand.

"I have a right to your consideration, uncle," he said. "I am an honest suitor, and I claim your consideration as if I were a stranger—as if I were Sir Hugh Tregaron."

"Very well. Since you claim to be treated as an ordinary suitor, I will so treat you. If any ordinary man were to come to me, seeking alliance with my family, I should learn his antecedents. I know all about your family, since you are the child of my own sister, but I don't know all your history since you came to years of manhood. There's been a great deal of mystery in your proceedings which I have not been able to fathom. I must know more about your past before I give my granddaughter to you as your wife. For instance, that old scandal about you, Darrel. What has become of that pretty actress Carmine Roff, the beautiful German girl who excited all London ten years ago? She suddenly disappeared from the stage, and was seen abroad with you. I heard that at Homburg and Baden Baden, ten years ago next summer, you introduced her to people as your wife. Where is she?"

Darrel Moer was ghastly pale as he replied, his eyes downcast:

"She is dead!"

"Was she legally your wife?"

Moer did not answer. His suppressed excitement was terrible.

"It will be necessary for me to know the truth before I consent to your marriage with Hilda. I have no desire to force your confidence, Darrel. I have refrained all these years from even questioning you about these reports which came to my ears from various sources, but if you persist in your claim to Hilda's hand, I, as her only guardian, must know something of your past. Was that German girl—or if she was not German, she was of German descent—was she legally and truly your wedded wife?"

A cold sweat sprang to Darrel Moer's forehead. He replied, in a nearly inaudible voice:

"Yes, my lord. I loved the girl, and she was pure and honest. I married her according to law in a register's office in London."

"And she is dead?"

"She is dead."

"Where did she die?"

"In Germany. The subject is painful to me, my lord. I loved the girl I so imprudently married, and I mourn her death still. At least, there is a sore spot in my heart when I think of her. She died within a year of our marriage. Remembering my poor cousin's fate, I dared not reveal my misalliance to you, and when Carmine died all necessity for confession died with her. That is the whole mystery, uncle. I am no unfit suitor, in point of morals, for any lady in the land."

"I am glad to hear it. If Hilda loves you, I am willing she should marry you some three years hence—not sooner. Upon this condition, that you wait quietly the time stipulated, I grant my consent to your betrothal."

From this decision, his lordship could not be swerved by any pleading whatever.

"I must be off," he said at last, arising. "Will you go with me, Darrel?"

"No, my lord. I will remain with Hilda."

Lord Waldemar did not delay. His carriage was waiting, and he set out at once for Westminster, taking the Thaxter house in his way.

Darrel Moer lingered in the dining-room until his relative had quitted the house, and then he slowly mounted the stairs, thinking sullenly:

"He took my proposal easier than I expected. He won't be as relentless to us as he was to Wallace, if we contract a hasty and secret marriage. That's the only kind of marriage I dare risk, for fear that Sir Hugh Tregaron might interfere with the story of my marriage to Honor Glint. Hilda shall be my wife within a month, and that secretly. Honor will be out of my way—the certificate destroyed—not a vestige of that mad marriage in existence. Bing must be at Bolton by this time. To-morrow he will spring his trap."

Moer passed through the wide hall to the drawing-room door. As he placed his hand upon the latch, the house knocker and bell were sounded at the same instant, and the hall porter gave admittance to—Grimrod!

The Mephistophelean manager had arrived to take his part in the strange drama.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The Man and His Shadow.

A shadow that, like all empty things, was insufferably vain of its importance, was one day excessively mortified and indignant at seeing a certain man always walking before it, and getting in its way on all occasions. Many a time and oft did it mend its pace and try to pass him, and more than once attempt to approach and knock him down. But somehow or other the man always kept before the shadow, so that it could never come near enough to accomplish the object. At length it got quite out of patience, and prayed to Jupiter to be revenged on this troublesome person. Jupiter, willing to punish its presumption, suddenly snatched up the man to the skies, and at the same moment the shadow was annihilated forever. "Alas!" said the aspiring shadow, "I am revenged at the expense of my own life! I have sacrificed him to whom I owed my existence, to a pique! Thus it is that people often bring down ruin on their own heads, in attempting to revenge themselves on others."

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1872.

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Corner of William and Spruce sts., New York.

Long Island Sound—Its Navigation and the Recent Calamity.

Considering the length of time that Long Island Sound has been navigated, and the large amount of travel which has passed through it, the accidents have been comparatively few—nothing like the number which have happened on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Indeed the general feeling in regard to passing through the Sound is, that it is just about as safe as staying at home.

This confidence, however, has been a good deal shaken by the calamity to the propeller *Metis*, which occurred on the morning of August 30th. It is impossible to feel that due care was practiced by those in charge of the vessel. She came in contact with a schooner about half-past three or four o'clock in the morning. Which vessel was at fault, and which ran into the other, are disputed points. The weather was rainy and somewhat tempestuous, but not foggy, or too thick for lights to be perceptible. There seems to be little or no room for doubt that the collision itself was attributable to carelessness in some quarter.

But the great fault, to which the terrible loss of life is attributable, lay in the want of thoroughness with which the examination of the steamer was made after the accident. She had been so badly damaged that in an hour, or an hour and a half, she sank below the water's edge. Yet those who undertook the responsible task of ascertaining her condition, discovered no leak whatever. At least it appears that they reported none.

It is said that the *Metis* at the time of the collision was only ten miles from the shore, and might have been beached if the injury which she had sustained had been promptly found out. Instead, however, she steamed on her way for some time—several of the passengers allege an hour or more—when she was found to be rapidly sinking, and without half time enough for many of them to dress, the people on board found themselves in a rough sea, clinging to the upper deck, which separated and floated off, to bales of cotton, cork mattresses and other articles, and many of them with nothing to cling to, and all in darkness and despair.

The negligence of the officers in not directly ascertaining the state in which the collision had left the steamer, seems, under the circumstances, to amount to a crime.

Among the many painful incidents of the calamity, we refer to a few as narrated by the daily papers:

A bride and bridegroom, who were married at Saratoga the day before, took passage on the *Metis* Thursday afternoon, on a bridal tour East. The bride was lost, and her husband telegraphed to the clergyman who had just married them, to perform the funeral service over the remains of his wife, which were washed ashore. It is a curious circumstance, that when the coffin was opened at Sharon Springs it was found to contain the body of another lady! The right remains have since been obtained, we believe.

A mother who was dashed on the beach by the furious waves, bore with her in safety her two children, one under each arm.

Two interesting children, from Brooklyn, were on board. The anxiety which this circumstance occasioned was first described in the *Herald* as follows:

> "The news caused intense excitement in Wall street and the neighborhood, and it was soon noised around that Mr. Wierum, the banker, of the firm of Randall & Wierum, at 52 Exchange Place, had two children on board. Hastening to the address above mentioned, Mr. Wierum was found, who kindly gave the following particulars: 'On Thursday,' said he, 'I took my two boys—Arthur, aged eight years, and Carl, aged seven years—on board the Metis, and placed them in charge of Mr. C. C. Adams, of the Gorham Manufacturing Company, who was taking them down on a visit to his farm at Newburyport. The state of suspense I am in as to whether they are alive or dead is awful. Ex-Commodore Stebbins has kindly telegraphed down to his yacht, which is at Stonington, to make all possible inquiries about my poor boys. I have also sent repeated telegrams myself, but have received no answer. If I do not shortly receive an answer I shall go down to Stonington to-night, (Friday.)'"

And the very same number of the paper which contained the above paragraph printed in another column a list of "Dead Identified," including:

> "Arthur Wierum, a child, of Brooklyn, and Carl Wierum, of Brooklyn."

Mr. ADAMS, who was rescued, gives the following touching account of the conduct and fate of the two little fellows whom he strove resolutely, but vainly, to save:

> "It was announced that the boat was sinking. I instantly ran to the children, woke them up, and tied securely a life-preserver around both of them, taking one myself. They were as gentle as lambs, and seemed aware that something dreadful was about to happen, and obeyed my orders implicitly, evincing the greatest heroism. I then noticed that the steamer was settling forward, and hurried as rapidly as possible aft. While going there a gentleman named McCrittis asked me if I wanted another life-preserver. I replied that it would be of great value, as it might save the children's lives. He gave it to me willingly. I took the children to the after part of the boat, to the guards, and told them 'they must jump into the sea with me, and that they must put all their trust in me, and that I would not leave them.'
>
> "I hesitated for a moment, thinking whether it would not be better to remain yet a while with the ship, but noticing that she was breaking up forward, the timbers commencing to fly up, and her hull settling, I felt that her doom was sealed. Placing a chair by the bulwarks, with one foot upon it and the other on the side of the ship, with my left arm I hugged the two children close to me, and with a desperate leap I sprang into the water with them. The poor little fellows never uttered a sound of alarm.
>
> "With the two children I was rapidly carried by the current to the bows of the ship. About twenty-five minutes had elapsed since I had taken to the sea. Poor little Carl presently seemed to be growing weaker and weaker. I continued my exertions to keep his head clear of the high running waves. The child made no complaint—no murmur; presently the younger brother died. Even then the children were together. I then exerted all my efforts toward saving Arthur. I placed his head higher up on my shoulder, and said, 'Do, Arthur, hold your head up, just as high as you can; I will assist you.' His reply was, 'I can't.' Very soon afterward he died. My thoughts were then centred on saving their bodies, and restoring them, if possible, to their parents. * * * * Both of the children were found clasped together in each other's arms, with the life-preserver attached to them, and it has been my melancholy duty to bring their bodies to their sorrowing father."

Mr. ADAMS relates one circumstance which would be regarded as strange and improbable if it were told in a novel. After the death of the two children, and when he had been in the water so long that he had himself almost given up hope, whom should he encounter but Mr. MCCRITTIS, the very same gentleman who had furnished him the second life-preserver, as stated above! And the manner in which he was now enabled to reciprocate that generous favor is thus related by himself:

> "Presently, however, daylight appeared, and I saw afar off the topmast of some vessel, though I could not make out her hull. This cheered me. A short time afterward I heard some one calling me. In a few moments I distinguished Mr. McCrittis, the gentleman who had given me the life-preserver. He asked me 'if I had seen the land.' I replied that 'I had not,' but, looking back of me, I saw Watch Hill. Mr. McCrittis was on a cork mattress, and some distance ahead of me. I soon neared him. He asked me 'whether I thought my plank would carry another man.' I reached out my hand to him and took him on, together with his mattress. Shortly after that the life-boat came in sight, and made for us rapidly. They hailed us, and bid us get on board. We hesitated, saying that probably there might be other of the passengers who wanted aid then more than we did, and that they had better rescue them. They informed me that they were nearing the breakers, and that we could not venture through them, but must come on board. I think we were almost among the last in the water who were saved."

Mr. WILLIAM E. SHERIDAN of Boston, who lost his wife, gives the following account of two little children, who also perished:

> "All last evening they played about the saloon, prattling gayly with the passengers, and seemingly wrapt up in each other. When bed-time came one of them said, 'Tiss me, mamma, tiss me, for I am going to sleep,' and I saw them no more alive. This morning their bodies were washed ashore on this beach, clasped in each other's arms. They were beautiful as in life, and their countenances bore a placid smile, as if their death was painless. Our boat capsized close by the shore, and it was a sad sight to us, who had gained our lives, when we witnessed the struggles of those who, unable to withstand the terrible undertow, were drowned in our very faces. Their upturned faces and despairing looks will haunt me to my dying day."

It is said that many persons were drowned in consequence of having the life-preservers placed too low down on their bodies, which caused their heads to sink under water.

One ludicrous case is mentioned. A fellow tied two life-preservers to his hips, and his carpet-bag around his neck, and with a full suit of clothes on, jumped into the sea! Yet, somehow or other, he was saved.

He Had a Testament.

"In his pocket were found a few dollars of money and a Testament."

This is the brief account of the dead body of a young man who was picked up among the unfortunate dead washed ashore from the wreck of the *Metis*. A few dollars, and—oh, consoling assurance to his parents and friends when they shall hear of his sudden death—a Testament!

What now would it avail had there been thousands of dollars found on his person?—what, in comparison with the assurance which is afforded that he kept ever by him the words of Eternal Life spoken by our Saviour?

Parents are ambitious for their children. We live in the world, and it is natural, and we do not say that it is not right, that all should be more or less worldly. But when a young man is suddenly cut off in his prime, no earthly success or distinction which he may have achieved, can afford the balm to the stricken hearts of his surviving friends which is derived from the consciousness that the New Testament was a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path, while he walked the earth.

The Cause of Cholera—The Best Disinfectants.

M. DE REUZY, Surgeon-Major of the Indian Army, says there is no doubt that the shockingly neglected state of sanitary matters in India brought cholera into Europe. One great want in India is good and sufficient *water*.

Dr. SANSON, a distinguished London physician, has been trying experiments with different materials for the disinfection of the air; and, as the result, he expresses the opinion that only volatile or gaseous disinfectants are efficient. He considers sulphurous acid, iodine and carbolic acid the best.

We have no doubt that the frequent use of a very small quantity of carbolic acid in every part of our buildings from which impure air could arise, would considerably diminish disease.

Slow to Suspect.

A woman in Wisconsin has been arrested, charged with having murdered, by poison, five persons. First her husband died suddenly, with symptoms of having been poisoned. Next her son died in the same way. Then her daughter. Her death was followed by that of two neighbors successively, to whom she administered tea.

It required only these five mysterious deaths to awaken the suspicions of the people residing in the vicinity, who seem to have been of a strangely confiding nature. They examined her house and found such harmless drugs as arsenic and strychnine.

The woman's name is Lamb; and it would seem that her wool had covered the eyes of her neighbors.

Ungallant.

The following paragraph from the *Rocky Mount* (N. C.) *Mail* would seem rather ungallant, but for the fact that the *Mail* is edited by a woman:

> SHE WOULD QUARREL.—There was five hundred dollars offered to an old lady in this county, notorious for quarrelling, if she would abstain for one day. We are sorry to inform our readers that, although almost destitute, she lost all chance before seven o'clock in the morning.

A Mother Shot by Her Son.

[From the Columbus Sun.]

Mr. Frank Golsby was attempting to shoot Mr. Zach. Anglin—both young men—when his mother rushed between. In the scuffle the pistol accidentally discharged in the hands of Mr. Golsby; the ball entered the head of his mother above the right eye. She died almost instantly.

BIRCH AND ASPEN.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

Looking out from my window upon the dark sides of the mountains, upon the massive clouds, upon the wind-blown trees, I see my pet, the birch, all in a shiver with each blast. The American white birch has all the grace and delicacy of its European namesake, and besides, a sensibility which it borrows from the aspen, or shares with it.

One should have, on every side of a country house, a group of aspens and birches. Planted together, you will have motion in charming variety. On other trees the leaves are so rigid in the stem, that a wind strong enough to set them into full activity is strong enough to set all the branches into motion. We recognize the force, and in large trees, the grandeur of motion. When a strong wind moves the whole tree, it swings its great boughs hither and thither, all its leaves and twigs utter their voices, which in chorus often rise to a roar. Yet, though the whole tree is agitated, and seems convulsed, one sees that it is only upon the exterior; while the top and sides are in full motion, the trunk stands firm, and seems motionless. Not till its very roots give way will it move, and then it does not bend, but goes down with stiff trunk.

The elastic birch, with long and slender limbs, avoiding all horizontalism, and aiming at the zenith, flexible to the last degree, moves in the wind with a grace and elasticity which has no parallel.

The American aspen has a shivering leaf upon a rigid branch. It stands quite stiff and motionless in bough, while its leaves are quivering and shivering in the most industrious manner. Right over against the east door of the Twin Mountain House, at a little distance, is a group of aspens, which are my perpetual delight. They are my wind-meters, or rather, zephyr measurers. On a hot noon, when no air seems stirring, and the trees about them doze and slumber, like good men at church, these twinklers, like roguish boys, are dancing in an imaginary wind, and playing with themselves, without a particle of wind, so far as I can perceive it. Now a shiver runs over them from head to foot; then the topmost leaves shake and swirl, while the bottom rests. Gradually the motion dies away all over, and the frolic ends. No, a single leaf begins to wag; it goes on in single blessedness, with accelerated pace, up and down, round and round, until, for the life of me, I cannot help bursting into a fit of laughter at this solitary dance.

At times, in certain moods, one cannot help thinking that the aspen is striving to communicate something. It seems to sigh and pant. It supplicates as one that suffers. Then, changing suddenly, it coaxes and winks and blinks at you as if it was only in fun. It will stand perfectly still a minute, as if looking to see what you will do, and then a laughing ripple runs all over it. It frolics with the same tireless grace as a kitten. Indeed it is a kind of compound kitten-tree, each leaf a particular kitten, all frolicking together, though there is not one of them, if the rest won't play, that is not ready, kitten-like as it were, to chace its own tail.

Why have landscape gardeners done so little with birches and aspens? Maples, oaks, ashes and evergreens are well. But in what other direction shall we look for such grace in form, such susceptibility to aerial influences, and such exquisite motion both of branch and leaf? The birches grow rapidly, are extremely hardy, will flourish upon poor soil, though loving a generous soil better. In ten years, with birch and aspen, one may rejoice in a thick grove. If the yellow locust be added to these, and the silver maple, one who plants at sixty may hope to see high over his head a respectable young forest, dense enough for shade and high enough to begin to comfort the imagination.

Long live the Aspen and the Birch! Only the young have just grounds for prejudice; but even boys soon outgrow the birch, and watch its sinewy motion without a thought of moving too, in shivering accord.

STARERS.

Staring is a lost art. There is your bold, unwinking, unblushing starer whom no allopathic dose of shame would ever put to rout. You are Miss Mary Mudge, and he knows it, and he means other people shall know that he knows it. He takes an inventory of your dress on that particular occasion, of your party if you are with one, of your conversation. He mentions to his friends all the little items he knows about you, and a great many more; and though you were never introduced to him, he tries to verify his assertion that he is a particular friend of your's by bowing to you.

And there is your intermittent starer, who pauses between the acts, and would fain appear deeply absorbed by some other object, to throw you off your guard, that he may have a better chance.

Then there is your starer who speaks to you on some trivial pretext, holding you in conversation for the benefit of a third party who sees Miss Mudge for the first time, and who wishes to settle, once for all, the vexed question of the shape of the nose, or the color of the eyes, or the existence of the bump of imagination. There is also the gentleman, a stranger to yourself, who has known your brother, and who is possessed with the idea that poetry, like the measles, runs through the entire family, and who, after spending an hour or two in probing this matter to the bottom, concludes that his theory is a mistake.

All these are novices in the art. These and all other questions proper to be asked respecting a person of note can be investigated without violating any rule of modesty, reticence or politeness. There is a way of looking at a person without appearing to look, known to the initiated, but open to the study of all. I have seen persons conduct this scrutiny while hypocritically pretending to read a paragraph in the newspaper. I have seen another perform the same feat while enacting dexterous connoisseurship over a painting.

It is sometimes not amiss to stop the object of your adoration in the street, and politely inquire the way to another. A solicitation for a charity concert has been known to be successful. But in this, as in everything else, tact, ladies and gentlemen, tact rules the world.

There are coarse questions which may be put to attain this and kindred objects, to which no degree of impertinent answering will do justice. The person thus questioned, in my view, is fully justified, not only in this, but in departing so widely from the truth as to render it impossible for the hoodwinked questioner ever to find his way back.

FANNY FERN.

How He Got Married.

A gossipping correspondent of the New York *Herald* gives the following account of the marriage of a noted Louisville politician:

> "One of the old citizens narrates that many years ago, when our hero fell in love, he found some opposition made to his marriage, and he repaired to old George D. Prentice, the editor of the Louisville *Journal*, to help him out. He went off to the plains, and the report came back that he had been killed by the Indians. Prentice at once rushed in, and wrote a whole column upon the virtues, graces and promise of this martyr to his invincible disposition, and there was a good deal of sympathy made in the State, and some regretted that our hero's suit had not been encouraged. Suddenly he came back again, resumed his suit under cover of the sympathy that had been roused for him, and was married without opposition."

YO-SEMITE VALLEY.

BY REV. J. HALL, D. D., NEW YORK.

It is after mid-day, and a cool wind is singing through the pines, the sound of which it is impossible to distinguish from that of the Falls in front of this hotel. I have this morning done enough of the work proper to this place to entitle me to rest; so I shall try to give an impression of the Valley to such of the readers of the *Ledger* as have not been here, or been bored by the descriptions of some one who has.

Let me begin by talking guide-book. The Valley runs about east and west, and the east end is called the head. It is any length you please under ten miles, according as you fix its ending or its beginning. It is about a mile broad in the level portion, and if one includes the gradual rise to the precipices formed by fallen debris, it is rather more from rock to rock. The points about it are not the great height of the surrounding mountains, but their nearness, which implies their steepness, and the impressive forms they assume. The Valley can be entered by travellers on the south or north, and by a choice of roads on the south. Of these, each has its advantages; one trail (road is here a useless word) leading over Inspiration Point, the other over Glacier Point, both being elevations from which one looks sheer down into the Valley, as well as over a good deal of the rim of the cup. The latter has the wider view, and in my judgment the easier descent to the hotels; but you will not be in good standing in the Valley if you do not look from both.

Once in the Valley, the approved sights are the following: Bridal Vail Fall goes with Inspiration Point; Vernal and Nevada Falls, at the head or east end of the Valley, occupy a day profitably, and if you have come in by Inspiration Point, another day is due to Glacier Point. Having reached this elevation, let no tourist return without riding to the top of Sentinel Dome—the only dome he is likely to climb, and from which he can look all around without obstruction. Unicorn Mount, the Cloud's Rest, Mount Hoffman, Mount Clark, Starr King, and the Red Mountains, are before him on the north and east, while westward he looks down the Valley, and sees how it merges in the general sea of great rolling granite billows. From this point also he can cultivate the acquaintance of the solemn friends to whose white heads he looked up from the Valley. There is North Dome, now seen to be rounded only on three sides, on the fourth ending a long mountain ridge. There is Washington Column, which looks as if set up to secure the Dome against any risk of toppling over into the river below. To the right of it is South Dome, the western half of it fallen out apparently, itself hard, bare and inaccessible. Watkins Mount, Mount Broderick, and other elevations, are under his eye. So is the entrance to the little Yo-Semite; so are the Nevada and Vernal Falls; while turning toward the west, Sentinel Rock and El Capitan, both precipitous, keep watch from opposite sides over the Valley; and far away, till the eye fails even in this clear atmosphere, there lie the great waves of granite, with all the intervals between them well covered with firs and pines, which thrive in the soil and disintegrated granite the great ice-ploughs raised and left for them, when the glaciers covered all the slopes of the Pacific.

To finish this guide-book part: if men are concerned about time, they can well enough see the sights of the Valley in two days. This will seem rank heresy to some, but the facts are simple. They can come in by Inspiration Point, which shows the Bridal Vail Fall, ride to the other falls, and see Mirror Lake on one day; the next, ride to Sentinel Dome, and in the evening walk over to Yo-Semite Fall, on which indeed the eye must rest morning and *evening from any one of the three hotels in* the Valley; and on the morning *of the third* day he rides out by the foot of El Capitan. Of course, if one has time, it can be well spent in studying the place, in walking around and noting the ever-varying shapes of the mountains, in "mooning" in the twilight or the night among the pines, or in bathing or fishing in the cool waters of the Merced, or—most impressive of all—climbing his difficult way through the openings among the mountains, which are not "gulches," nor "glens," nor "gorges," nor "notches," but "canyons." No other word describes them.

A word as to the inhabitants of the Valley will interest some who care more for men than mountains. There cannot be over a hundred residents; there are fewer in winter, when for four months the sun never shines upon parts of the Valley. But if not numerous, they are various. Indians, negroes, Chinese, and most varieties of whites are here, including Americans, Irish, English, Scotch, Portuguese, German, Italian, and possibly others. The Indians—Diggers—are few; the men catching fish and doing some chores; they dress as others do, but are poor and degraded looking, with a look of cunning and coarseness in their faces. Among the employments of the squaws, one may be noticed which throws light on the life of the Indian. Seated on the top of a flat rock, four women, each with a heap of acorns between their knees, beat them with a large stone, lifted over the head with both hands, into a coarse meal. It is a hard way of providing for the winter.

You can find a barber, a telegraph operator and a photographer in the Valley. You can bathe, gamble, or trade. But your chief interest after your own personal comfort, will lie among the quadrupeds which carry you at the rate of two dollars and a half per diem. The horses are not as eager for the road as Dexter, and every one knows the peculiarities of mules. Fast horses would not possibly suit trails where the footing is eighteen inches wide, and rough at that, and the down look a clear thousand feet; but some of these animals have brought the art of slow motion to a very fine point indeed. Perhaps the fact that their barley is ten cents a pound in the Valley has something to do with this. We were assured indeed, when symptoms of fatigue showed themselves after eleven hours without food, that they were "shamming," and that "they lied like anything"—a convenient expression which enables you to supply politician, editor, stump orator, guide-book, guide, or any other ideal of the false, you may have. That they learn to lie is very likely. Evil communications have a well-known tendency, and if the horses which came twenty-four miles the first stage ever read the advertisement in the San Francisco papers of "fresh horses every twelve miles," their morals must have suffered a shock. But after all, they are steady, patient, and on the whole as reliable as horses in general.

The community cannot be said to be "settled" in any sense. Not to speak of the earthquakes which as lately as March last shook the Valley and alarmed the people, sending down great rocks, and keeping up the disturbance for weeks, the land is yet of uncertain tenure, the hope being on the part of the occupants that the State will buy out their rights of occupation and improvement, with that splendid munificence with which States are supposed to trade. Meantime the Commissioners have in hand the regulation of public matters, and have not pleased everybody. "Think of them," said a resident in the Valley, "authorizing that man, as he said, to fix the Nevada Falls! A creature like that to tinker the grand works of God Almighty! Well, they can't spoil the mountains; if they could they would fix El Capitan, or the moonlight." California is very busy yet, setting up house; she will, no doubt, look after the ornaments presently.

Among curious things one notices in the Valley, one is the honesty of the people. Doors are not locked. Things are left about without any fear of loss, and lost articles find their owners where concealment would be easy. The writer had personal evidence of this, and has satisfaction in mentioning it.

The depth of the Valley renders some arrangements necessary that are not incumbent on persons located in less picturesque places. Of the fifteen or sixteen persons who remained in the Valley last year, some require a separate winter house, on which, except for six weeks, the sun will shine. Four months' perpetual want of sunlight would be too much.

One of the prettiest sights in the Valley is at early morning and in the evening, when light is clear and bright on the domes and peaks, and the shadows still linger below. No high degree of imagination or of devoutness is needed to suggest the "light sown for the righteous," when they live an elevated and pure life, and so enjoy more than common men of the "beauty of the Lord."

A MATRIMONIAL ADVENTURE.

BY JUDGE CLARK.

The sensation of the season at Swellcove was Miss Arabella Wyshbone, the rich heiress—such, at least, she passed for. A wealthy aunt, in infirm health, the story ran, had willed her an immense fortune, of which, any day, she might become the mistress. Quoted at nineteen, she looked older; but such anachronisms are common in feminine chronology. Her figure was thinnish, her hair reddish, her eyes grayish, and not quite *parallel*. If you don't fancy the picture, we can only say you would have passed for no judge at Swellcove.

Among the visitors at the "Cove" that season, was a nice young man from the city. We needn't describe him more particularly—to know one of these nice young men is to know all. His name was De Quincey Dothunter.

Mr. Dothunter's business was genteel idleness. By his own account, he was down on the right side of the books of a rich old uncle, whom the life tables didn't give over five years to run, to say nothing of the family gout, and a hopeful contingency of apoplexy.

How in the world a young lady of Miss Wyshbone's cleverness could tolerate such a puppy as De Quincey Dothunter, was the oft expressed wonder of the crowd of envious competitors to whom it was obvious that that gentleman's attentions were more favorably received than their own.

But women are a law unto themselves. The fact is—and we are content to state it, letting the reason go—that Miss Wyshbone exhibited so marked a preference for Mr. Dothunter's society, that that gentleman as good as had the field to himself.

Both were too discreet to be precipitate. There was none of that headlong falling in love, which is never found in polite society. They had sat on the sand, and paddled in the surf together, many times, before anything which might be called of a tender nature passed between them. And when at last Mr. Dothunter *did* venture a hint at the state of his feelings, the lady at once cut him short.

"That is a matter first to be discussed between our relatives," she said.

"Certainly, but—"

"Come, I can't hear another word now. My aunt will be down here to-morrow, and if your uncle—"

Mr. Dothunter looked blank.

"My uncle," he said, with some confusion of voice and manner—"the fact is, my uncle is so chained down to business—his nose so kept to the mercantile grindstone—you know how it is with these old fellows—besides, he is a confirmed invalid, confined most of the time to his room."

"Very well, sir," replied the firm young lady; "till he and my aunt have talked the affair over, I can have nothing more to say."

Mr. Dothunter's face brightened at length.

"What time could your aunt see my uncle?" he asked.

"Any time day after to-morrow—say five o'clock."

"I will return to the city this evening," said Mr. Dothunter, "and make a personal appeal to my uncle."

Mr. Dothunter took his leave, and the next train for the city.

At the time appointed, Mr. Dothunter's uncle, a sprucely attired elderly gentleman, called at the principal Swellcove hotel, and having sent up his card, was duly ushered into the presence of a genteel looking elderly lady.

Bows and compliments exchanged, the business of the meeting was at once proceeded to.

"My nephew, madam," the gentleman began, "informs me that his happiness depends on the answer you shall give to the demand, which he has deputed me to make, of your niece's hand."

"This is too grave a matter to be decided hastily," she said. "Arabella, you see, is so very young—and then the fortune she will, at no distant day, inherit—" A hacking cough interrupted the sentence.

"And my nephew's prospects," warmly broke in the old gentleman, "most people would call not inconsiderable. The house of Trett & Co., of which I have the honor to be the head, is not, I believe, unknown in commercial circles. My nephew will come in for all I have—and very soon, too, I fear," Mr. Trett added, making a not very successful effort to look frail.

"The importance of such a union makes deliberation all the more necessary," replied the lady. "I would suggest at least a year's delay."

"A year!" Mr. Trett fairly bounded in his chair. Had he been himself the lover, his disappointment could scarcely have been more manifest. "Good Heavens! consider, madam! My nephew is of an impatient temper, and if your niece loves him as he loves her, they will certainly be driven to elope, and what would you do *then*, madam?"

"Of course I should forgive her, poor dear—she is all I have left in the world; but then it would quite kill me if she acted so," said the old lady, crying and coughing together.

Mr. Trett's eyes glistened with pleasure. The answer to his last question, which he had waited for with eagerness, was plainly satisfactory.

Finding the aunt's resolution inflexible, but expressing the hope she might yet be induced to alter it, Mr. Trett did not prolong his visit.

Next day Mr. Dothunter rushed wildly into Arabella's presence. On her cheeks were traces of recent tears.

"I know the worst!" he cried. "Fly with me, dearest, beyond the reach of the cruelty that would defer our hopes!"

Sobbing, she leaned her head upon his shoulder.

In a few hurried words he consoled her; and in less time than such an affair was ever planned before, a rendezvous was fixed, and before an hour had elapsed, they twain were one flesh.

What was to be done next?

"Go and ask your aunt's forgiveness," suggested the bridegroom.

"She left this morning."

"Well, we can go where she is."

"Alas! she will never forgive me," whimpered Arabella.

"Nonsense! I know she *will*."

"*How* do you know?"

"Why, she told me so herself yesterday."

He could have bit his tongue off for making such a slip.

"Told you so herself! Why, you were not here yesterday, and you never saw my aunt. Wretch!" she exclaimed, a gleam of intelligence flashing over her countenance as she closely scanned her husband's features, "I see it all. Your uncle *is* a myth. It was *yourself*, in disguise, whom I saw yesterday," she added, betraying herself in turn.

"Traitress!" he cried, catching at her last unguarded words. "It was *you* who were your own aunt yesterday. I was a fool not to see it."

For an instant the eyes of the pair met in hate and scorn; then turning their backs upon each other, they went their several ways—each, mayhap, to take counsel of one of those eminent legal gentlemen skilled in the procurement of "divorces without publicity."

HELP THE WEARY ON THEIR WAY.

BY CALEB DUNN.

It is a simple thing to give
  A kindly word, a cheering smile,
To those who in misfortune live,
  Whose days no pleasures e'er beguile;
And better far it is to bless,
Than heed not sorrow or distress.

Happy the man who hath the power,
  And hath the will, to uphold the weak—
To aid the poor in darkest hour,
  And words of sympathy to speak;
For he in all the grateful land
Among the best beloved shall stand.

There is no nobler one than he
  In all the world; nor can be found
More natural nobility
  Than that which his pure life has crowned
With acts of love, with goodly deeds,
Which bravely meet misfortune's needs.

Misers we find where'er we turn,
  Cold-hearted men who worship self,
Who every noble prompting spurn,
  Whose god is gold, whose joy is pelf;
But though his coffers groan with weight,
Vain is the miser's vast estate.

Riches are good when rightly used,
  To elevate and bless the race;
Riches are evil when abused,
  And gained to purchase power and place;
Wealth is a glorious thing to own
When garnered not for self alone.

So let us strive the best we may
  To aid all fainting souls along,
And lead them out into the day
  From darkness, so they may grow strong;
And for our willing sacrifice
We'll win the Love that never dies.

THE BLACK DOCTOR;

OR, THE

Prophecy of the Voodoo King.

AN HISTORICAL TALE OF THE SPANISH RULE IN LOUISIANA.

By WILLIAM HENRY PECK,
Professor of History in the University of the State of Louisiana.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LEON AND PEREZ.

Sancho Perez confronted Leon de Vargas with a steady and defiant gaze, despite the consciousness that sudden death seemed nearer to him than it had ever been before, even during his life of perilous daring.

Leon de Vargas, pallid with that awful pallor which comes upon the faces of some men who would rather fly than fight, but who will fight ere they fly, and who will kill if they fight, or be killed, held his cocked musket steadily aimed at the breast of the convict.

"I yield, Leon de Vargas!" said Perez suddenly, after an instant of profound silence; and as he spoke he knelt upon one knee, and buried his knife to the haft in the grassy ground.

Then, still kneeling, he held his palms toward Leon, and added:

"I yield to Monsieur Leon de Vargas—here! on the spot where his father was assassinated!"

Perez uttered these startling words in his own deep and imposing voice, in a tone distinct but not very loud.

"Who are you, fellow? and why do you say that?" demanded Leon, amazed, but not off his guard.

"I am one who, some twenty years ago, chanced to be near this spot when a pretended duel was fought here—by Don Amigo, your father, and Col. Dudley, the father of your cousin Adrian."

"I have heard something of that affair," said Leon, who, as we know, was fresh from his eavesdropping in the Varlville Mansion. "Why do you call it a pretended duel?"

"You must have heard of the duel very recently," said Perez, surprised, "since it was but three days ago when you told a person in New Orleans that your father and the father of your cousin perished in the swamp during a tornado. Or did you tell that to deceive? No; Leon de Vargas was not lying when he told that. He believed it."

Leon, much surprised, reflected a moment. He remembered then that some one had asked him, as if casually, if his father had not died in Cuba, and that he had replied as Perez stated; for so, at the time, Leon believed Don Amigo had perished.

Leon did not suspect the truth; that is, that Perez, for purposes of his own, had had that question asked of him.

"I remember," he said at length, "that the priest they call Père Dominique was the person to whom I spoke of the death of my father. I have discovered since, and only this day, that my father was killed by Colonel Dudley. I never saw you before so closely as I do now," he added, with a scarcely concealed shudder of disgust, "but I think I have seen you at a distance. I think I remember that red skull cap. You serve Père Dominique?"

"When it suits me, Monsieur. I have hired myself to him, so I may say that he is my master."

"What is your name?"

"Joseph, sir."

"What are you doing here?"

"I am a Voodoo doctor—"

"Oh, a Voodoo doctor," said Leon, interested instantly. "There is another new Voodoo doctor under the protection of the Père Dominique, I think."

"Adraste Scipian, sir."

"Yes, that is the name. And you are also a Voodoo doctor?"

"I am, sir."

"And doing what, when I roused you?"

"Studying a plant, sir," replied Perez, who did not know that Leon had discovered his gazing at the miniature. In fact, Perez had closed his hand so quickly upon the miniature at the instant he heard the click of the musket, and concealed it so instantaneously, that had not Leon already seen it, he could not have suspected what Perez had been gazing at.

Nor had Perez any suspicion that Leon had been stooping over him before the young man cocked his musket.

"Oh, you were studying a plant," repeated Leon, who did not choose to let the other know what he had seen.

"Yes, sir, a plant—this," replied Perez, plucking up a weed.

"I heard you say, 'Yes, yes, it is angelic.'"

"True, sir. That is what I said. It is superb as a charm weed in our Voodoo rites."

"Oh, as a charm weed! That may be so. But let us speak of something else just now—of the death of my father."

"Who is unavenged, Monsieur," said Perez, in French, and who seemed to be well acquainted with the character of this young man.

And then Perez invented and told a story of the assassination of Don Amigo de Vargas by Colonel Dudley, which drove Leon wild with rage and vengeance, and made him vow in his heart to kill his cousin Adrian as a sacrifice to the manes of his murdered father. Perez rounded off his story with the statement that Don Amigo, in the very throes of death, had raised his pistol and shot Colonel Dudley dead.

After his storm of passion had become somewhat allayed, Leon turned to Perez and suddenly and sharply said:

"You have lied to me, Joseph."

"In what, Monsieur?"

"You told me that when you first became aware of my presence you were studying a plant."

"And I was, Monsieur—a plant— Ah! I see! Monsieur thought I was gazing at this," replied Perez, with ready cunning, and drawing the miniature from his pocket.

To be detected in one lie might be to be detected in others.

"Yes, I saw that on the ground, and I believed it was what you were looking at, and what you were saying was angelic. Give it to me."

Perez obeyed, with assumed humility and readiness; but in his heart he cursed the temporary necessity which caused him to surrender, even for a moment, the portrait of his adored Angelique.

"Ah! what a beautiful face! It is indeed angelic!" exclaimed Leon, in French.

"Monsieur has never seen a living face like that—like that, but older?" asked Perez.

"Never. It is charming! It is glorious! Surely no mortal so beautiful ever lived! It is an ideal portrait, of course! Ah! could I but meet a lady so perfectly beautiful!" replied Leon, more to his own thoughts than to Perez, and gazing rapturously upon the portrait.

Perez, seeing the young man's infatuation, told him that the original of the picture was then hidden somewhere in Louisiana, that she was a Spanish princess, that Père Dominique was looking for her, and that it was the opinion of Père Dominique that one of the servants of Madame Varlville knew where the young lady was hidden.

"What! One of my grandmother's servants!" exclaimed Leon, amazed and staring.

"Yes, Monsieur. I do not know why Père Dominique imagines that such is the fact; but he does. He is of the opinion too—I overheard him say as much to Adraste Scipian—that nothing could be learned from that servant unless she—"

"Oh—the servant is a woman?"

"Yes, Monsieur. Unless she was wholly in the power of Père Dominique."

"And which of the women servants is this one, Joseph? Perhaps I might force her to tell me. There is not a servant in the mansion, nor on the Varlville plantations, that is not afraid of me, or to be persuaded by me—except one. But of which one did Père Dominique speak?"

"Of Mercita, Monsieur."

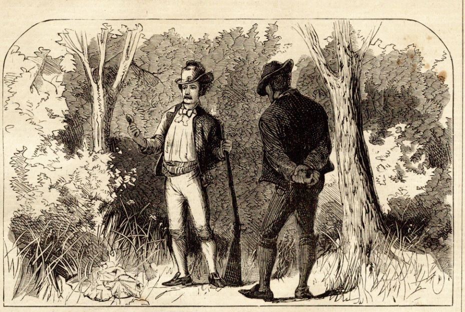
"Ha! Of Mercita the housekeeper?"

"The same, Monsieur."

"And she is the only one of all the Varlville slaves," replied Leon, with a bitter imprecation upon Mercita, "that I can neither threaten nor persuade."

"That is strange, Monsieur."

Leon did not think it was strange at all, though he did not choose to say so to Perez; the fact being that there had existed an antipathy between him and Mercita from the first moment of their acquaintance, twelve years before.



LEON DE VARGAS ADMIRING THE MINIATURE RECEIVED FROM PEREZ.

This antipathy on the part of Leon had increased to bitter hatred of Mercita with his years. He had soon discovered that the intellect and morality of the supposed negress were infinitely superior to his own, and this fact had filled his heart with a desire to injure Mercita. He had plotted, and schemed, and laid snares for her ruin, that she might be flogged, or imprisoned, or be sold.

But Madame Varlville was a just woman, and protected her slave as jealously as she would have protected her own reputation, had any one dared to assail it.

At length, a year before the illness of Madame Varlville, Mercita had detected Leon in some act, or attempted act, so base that had she revealed it to Madame Varlville, that just-minded lady would have expelled Leon from her house, and discarded him forever.

This act, which we may state here, was an attempt made by Leon to fire the Varlville mansion, and with the design that the crime should be fixed upon the innocent Mercita. For Leon so hated her, that he was willing to burn down even the hospitable house of his aged grandmother, to effect the destruction of Mercita.

It chanced, however, that his attempt failed, and in such a way as to place him at the mercy of Mercita. Nor had Mercita been slow to seize the opportunity to thereafter hold so bitter an enemy at her mercy; for while the terror of his unexpected detection was still upon him, the resolute woman had forced him, by threat of disclosure to Madame Varlville, to write out and sign a full confession of his attempted crime, and why he had made the attempt.

Armed with this, which she carefully preserved, Mercita had held Leon de Vargas in her power for a year, so that he had not again dared to molest her peace.

"I am going to tell you something, Joseph," said Leon, after a moment's reflection. "I hate the woman Mercita, and I wish she was dead."

"Oh! Diablos!" thought the rejoiced Perez. "I am lucky in stumbling upon this young rascal, who is half fox and half tiger!"

"Monsieur," he said aloud, "has a perfect right to hate any one, if he pleases. And if it pleases Monsieur, I will hate Mercita as he does."

"That is right, Joseph. You see, she once saw me doing something which would have greatly displeased my grandmother, had it come to Madame Varlville's knowledge, and I was fool enough to write something and give it to Mercita."

"Ah, Monsieur was a little hasty in that!"

"Hasty! I was, just under the circumstances, compelled to give the writing to Mercita."

"She is only a slave, Monsieur."

"She is a devil! a black devil!" exclaimed Leon spitefully. "And she can make Madame Varlville believe anything."

"And Mercita has that writing yet, Monsieur?"

"I believe so. Of course she has. She is no fool to throw it away. Not she. I always hated her—from the moment I first saw her. I wish the devil had choked Sancho Perez before he sold her to my grandmother."

"Diablos!" thought Perez. "That is a kind wish for me, though he does not know me."

"And it was Sancho Perez who sold Mercita to Madame Varlville, Monsieur?"

"Yes. That was the man's name. I saw him when he brought Mercita to our house. I was about ten years old then. I'd know him now, if he was before me."

"Caramba! I doubt that," thought Perez, as he swept his great bony and stained hands over his scarred and noseless face, and grinned maliciously under them.

"He was a tall and handsome man, with a splendid black beard, Joseph."

"And he would be now, but for 'Isadora Raymundo.' A million maledictions on 'Isadora Raymundo' and the mines of Almeida, and the thrice accursed Russian plot that crushed me!" internally roared Perez, with great difficulty suppressing a "diablos," with which the woods would have echoed as with the boom of a Columbiad.

But restraining his wrath, Perez artfully suggested a plot to Leon whereby he could poison Madame Varlville and his cousin Adrian, and thereby come into possession of the entire estate, including Mercita, from whom he could then wrest both the paper containing the confession of his guilt and also the secret hiding-place of Angelique. Leon listened eagerly, but was too wary to commit himself at once, and said:

"We have been talking a long time, Joseph, for a first meeting. Well, I will think the matter over, Joseph. Where can I find you, if I wish to see you—say day after to-morrow?"

"Monsieur, I and an old negro named Juan have a hut in the woods two or three miles from this place. Perhaps you know the hut, Monsieur," said Perez, who then described the locality of the hut.

"I have been in the hut," said Leon, "and will meet you there at the appointed time."

The young man then started for the Varlville mansion, and Perez, taking a different path from that pursued by Leon, also returned to the city.

On the next day, that which had happened to Perez happened to Leon; that is, some one came suddenly upon Leon in the very spot where we have seen him creep upon Perez, and as suddenly surprised him as he was gazing admiringly upon the same miniature.

After arriving at the duelling ground, Leon gazed about for some time, and then reclined upon the fragrant grass, lying on his left side, with his left hand and arm supporting his head.

Then drawing the adored miniature from his bosom, he placed it on the grass and gazed at that bewitching face.

"Beautiful one!" he said aloud, after many minutes passed in silent and rapturous gazing. "Adorable Angelique—yes, thou art angelic! Beloved Angelique, thou shalt be mine! If already thou hast a lover, I will kill him! Thou must love none but Leon de Vargas, Angelique. Thou shalt be my wife, Angelique! dearest Angelique! All last night, dear one, I dreamed of thee! of thy lips pressed to mine!"

And much more said this mad fellow, in love with a picture; not very loud, but loud enough to be distinctly heard by some one who had not stolen upon him as he had upon Perez the preceding day, with the cunning of a fox, but who was standing there at Leon's back, after arriving there with no covert purpose—some one who had halted just as he was about to address Leon, on hearing the latter utter a name—the name Angelique.

Suddenly, and while Leon was apostrophizing the miniature, this listener darted a hand over the shoulder of the reclining young man, and snatched away the miniature as a fish-hawk plucks a fish from the crest of a wave.

Up sprang Leon, with the quickness and wrath of a startled panther, and beheld his hated cousin, Adrian Dudley!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SWORD DUEL IN THE SWAMP.

As has been told, the cousins were very much alike in stature and feature. Each was tall and powerful, each eminently handsome; but Adrian's form was the more robust, his hair and complexion and eyes not so dark as those of Leon, and his features fuller and more eloquent of good than those of his dark-hearted cousin.

"Insolent!" exclaimed Leon, his black eyes flashing rage, hate and vexation at Adrian.

"Scoundrel!" ejaculated Adrian, his blue eyes flaming with sudden and violent wrath.

These two young men, when in the city, wore rapiers, or walking swords, as was the fashion with gentlemen of that day; but when they hunted or rambled in the woods, swamps, or about the plantations, they wore *couteaux de chasse*, or short broad-swords.

The cousins were armed with these, and, as each ejaculated as above, each drew his sword with the suddenness of lightning.

The musket of Adrian had fallen upon the ground as he snatched the miniature from the grass. That of Leon was also upon the sward, and Adrian stood astride of these formidable weapons.

About five paces intervened between the cousins as they drew their hangers, that distance being between them as Leon sprang to his feet.

"Give me the miniature, robber that you are!" cried Leon, trembling with rage.

"It is you who are a robber, or a thief!" retorted Adrian. "How came you with her picture!"

"Her picture! Ha! you have seen her! You know her! You love her—my Angelique?" furiously exclaimed Leon.

"Your Angelique! you dare call her *your* Angelique! She is my Angelique!" replied Adrian, as fiercely.

"Diablos!" muttered a concealed and unsuspected witness of this scene, for Sancho Perez was not far off in the reeds near the spot, and was about to show himself to Leon at the moment of Adrian's emerging from the woods.

"Diablos!" muttered Perez, peering through the reeds about twenty paces from the cousins. "It is my Angelique that these two cockerels are clacking over! Caramba! let us be as quiet now as a sleeping alligator!"

"She shall be mine!" cried Leon, advancing a pace toward Adrian, and brandishing his sword.

"Ho!" thought Perez. "We are to see a duel to the death between the sons, on the spot where their fathers slew each other! Bravo!"

"Halt there!" commanded Adrian, extending his sword toward Leon. "Tell me first where you obtained this miniature."

"It is enough to say to you that it is mine, Adrian Dudley."

"That is not enough to say to me, Leon de Vargas."

"Well—I found it."

"Then I will keep it," said Adrian, slipping the miniature into his bosom.

"And I will kill you!" roared Leon, infuriated, and rushing at his cousin.

"Bravo! Now they are at it!" muttered the hidden Perez, whose love to behold combats held him quiet.

The surrounding woods now resounded with the clash of steel. The cousins were equal in strength and skill; and the fury of Leon gave him fiery courage at the moment to battle with the really more brave Adrian, especially as the latter acted wholly on the defensive, and with but two purposes: the first to guard himself, the second to disarm without wounding his cousin.

"Bravo! It is as good as looking at a cock-fight in Havana!" muttered Perez, delighted. "Senor Adrian is the cooler and the stronger. He will be the victor. Ha!"

And at this moment the sword of Leon snapped at the hilt.

Leon hurled the hilt at his cousin, and made a rush for the muskets. Adrian also sprang toward those weapons, and for a moment there was a fierce hand-to-hand struggle between the cousins.

Leon endeavored to gain possession of his own gun. Adrian made no effort to secure his own, but a violent struggle to keep Leon from obtaining possession of the latter's fire-arm.

"Adrian must kill Leon, or Leon will kill Adrian," thought Perez, as he noted the fierce grappling of the strong and active young men over the two muskets. "It does not matter if Leon kill Adrian—so much the better for my purpose—but it will not do for Adrian to kill Leon. I must interfere at once."

He bounded from the reeds with a loud yell, crying:

"Halt, Messieurs! Others are coming! others are coming!" and at the same moment the tall and stately figure of Madame Varlville appeared upon the scene, as she forced her way through a dense growth of vines which hung like a curtain between the trunks of two great trees.

The coming of Madame Varlville was precipitate as it was opportune. A fancy to visit the spot where the husbands of her daughters had fought and died twenty years before, had seized her mind on that morning, and she had resolved to visit the place alone, and hence her appearance on the scene.

"Diablos! It is Madame Varlville! Caramba! I must be off!" thought Perez, and unperceived by either of the others, or not regarded at the moment, he glided back to his ambush in the reeds.

This interruption of the impending duel between Adrian and Leon was that to which we have seen Madame Varlville allude, in a soliloquy recorded in a preceding chapter.

She sought to reconcile the cousins, but in vain. Leon demanded the picture of Angelique, and Adrian refused to give it up.

"What is the thing of which you speak, my children?" asked Madame Varlville.

"Oh, only a miniature of a young lady—which I found, and which, therefore, is mine," replied Leon.

"A miniature of a young lady! What young lady?"

"To tell the truth, I do not know," said Leon.

"Then how did you call the miniature by the name of the lady whom it so much resembles?" demanded Adrian.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Madame Varlville impatiently. "Let me see the miniature, Adrian."

"Mother, you must first promise to return it to me, unless he can explain how he obtained it," replied Adrian, with respectful firmness.

"I will certainly retain it from both of you, if you are to fight about its possession. Give it to me, Adrian."

Adrian drew from his pocket the case, but not the picture. The picture had slipped from the case, and had escaped from the pocket by a rent. The rent had been made by one of those furious thrusts made by Leon, as he and Adrian fought with their swords.

"Here is the case in which the miniature was set, mother; but I no longer have the picture. It has slipped from both case and pocket," said Adrian, giving the case to Madame Varlville, and beginning instantly to search about eagerly in the grass.

"He is not lying," thought Leon, skilled in reading the expression of his cousin's frank features. "He has really lost it. Well, I may find it before he does!" And he too began to search the ground over which they had fought.

"I command you, Leon, and you, Adrian, to give it to me the instant you find it," said Madame Varlville sternly; and then she began to examine the golden case.

The golden case had saved the life of Adrian, though he did not know it at the time. It had intercepted a sword thrust that else would have pierced his heart. The point of the sword, striking the back of the case, had glanced off and cut open the breast pocket of Adrian. The shock had dislodged the miniature from the case, and afterward, while the cousins struggled for the possession of the muskets, the miniature had flown high in the air, unperceived by the combatants, and fallen at quite a distance from them.

Perez had seen it fall. He secured it eagerly; he now had it, as he crouched in his ambush of reeds.

The point and edge of the sword had done more. It had sheared off the diamond cross, and nearly all the inscription.

Madame Varlville could make nothing of it, as she gazed at the mutilated Russian characters.

She knew from what part of his dress Adrian had just taken the case. She saw that the marks of violent erasure were fresh.

"Was it cut thus, Adrian, before you two fought?" she asked.

"No, mother. Leon's sword did that."

"I thank God," said Madame Varlville solemnly, "that this case was in your pocket, Adrian, to preserve your life; and oh, Leon, my son, more deeply do I thank God that it was there to save you from being a murderer. Let us find the picture that has given to you two the hearts of assassins!"

And then Madame Varlville also began to search the grass for the lost picture.

All search was, of course, in vain.

The strong and bony hand of the hidden convict clutched the miniature as he crouched in the reeds.

"Diablos!" he thought. "I have it again! the picture of my Angelique! I shall take care that no one else shall get it while Sancho Perez is alive."

Meanwhile the cousins and their kinswoman continued the search till they became satisfied that the miniature could not be found.

Madame Varlville and Adrian then departed, leaving Leon on the spot where the quarrel had taken place.

He gazed after them until their forms had disappeared amid the recesses of the swamp forest, and then threw himself upon the grass in a fit of rage and vexation.

Many things had happened within the last two hours to fill his heart with wrath and mortification, and make him ready for the deliberate commission of any crime.

Suddenly he remembered that Perez had appeared for a few minutes during the late struggle, and disappeared quickly at the coming of Madame Varlville.

He sprang to his feet, muttering:

"I will go to the old hut and consult with Joseph. Ha! in him I may find a valuable ally."

And just at this moment Perez emerged from his ambush, feigning great sympathy for Leon, and saying:

"Ah, Monsieur, what a pity that Madame came! I was just about to rush to your aid when I heard her coming."

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOW THE POISONING WAS DONE.

Perez took Leon to the hut and arranged a plan for the poisoning of Madame Varlville and Adrian. He of course had to have the countenance of Don Sebastian, and so communicated as much of the matter to him as he thought it expedient to unfold.

The story told to Don Sebastian and Ivan by Perez amounted in brief to this: that Leon de Vargas, believing him to be a Voodoo doctor familiar with poisons, as all Voodoo doctors were thought to be, had applied to him; that he, Joseph, when in Louisiana many years before, had witnessed the duel of Vargas and Dudley, and had persuaded Leon to believe that he, Joseph, was Pedro Vargas, the mulatto brother of Don Amigo; that Leon had confided to him his hate of Adrian Dudley and of Mercita, and his fears that Madame Varlville might in the end disinherit him and leave all to Adrian; that to obtain a certain paper given by Leon to Mercita, Leon desired to have her wholly in his power; that he could obtain such power only by becoming sole master of all the Varlville property; that he could become sole master only by the death of Madame Varlville and Adrian Dudley; and that he, Joseph, had laid a plan before Leon, which the latter was about to attempt.

Unsuspicious of Perez, the two Russians considered the matter seriously.

"We do not desire the death of Madame Varlville, nor of Adrian Dudley," said Don Sebastian to Ivan. "We certainly desire to commit no crime for the benefit of this young would-be assassin. But in this scheme of Joseph I see that which may enable us to get the negress Mercita wholly in our power. I see my way. We will let Joseph continue to deceive this Leon de Vargas. I shall so guide the affair that in the end Madame Varlville, who has never sold a slave, shall sell the negress Mercita to—let us say, to Père Dominique."

"Ah, that would indeed be a grand success for us," replied Ivan.

Therefore Perez was ordered to continue his deception of Leon de Vargas, and to hasten matters as much as possible.

Perez received a vial of a certain extract, given to him by Don Sebastian, and this vial Perez gave to Leon.

On the 1st of May mentioned, Leon de Vargas concealed himself in the mansion in such a manner that his presence there was not suspected by any of its inmates. He succeeded also in poisoning the confections unseen, and also in leaving the house unseen.

And then his courage failed him.

He did not dare to re-enter the mansion boldly, as Perez had advised him to do.

A sudden suspicion that if he were to eat of the confection in his room, in accordance with the plan of Perez, in order to be made temporarily sick, he might suffer a great deal, had so affected him while he was in the act of poisoning that which was in Adrian's room, that instead of impregnating that which was in his own room with the nauseous drug furnished in a second vial by Perez, he impregnated it with the same that he put into Adrian's.

Remembering this when it was too late, that is, immediately after he had effected a secret exit from the mansion, he did not dare go back.

It was easy for him to conceal himself in the darkness. Two gigantic trees stood near and in front of the Varlville mansion.

The branches of one of these great trees nearly touched the windows of Madame Varlville's bedroom. Being as active as a panther and as stealthy as a fox, Leon easily obtained among the branches of this tree a position from which he could perceive all or nearly all that took place in the bedroom of Madame Varlville.

Leon's place of concealment and observation was excellent for his purpose.

"If the poison affects her," he rightly conjectured, "she will be brought to her room and placed in her bed at once, whether she be dead or dying, or only sick. Then I can listen, and overhear."

He had made a mistake concerning the movements of his cousin Adrian. He did not know that Adrian had gone to the theatre. He supposed that Adrian would be at home at the usual hour, that is, before nine o'clock. Even while he climbed to his ambush, Leon had feared to be seen only by Adrian, as the latter might return home.

A sudden fancy to go to the theatre that night prevented Adrian from being in time to partake of the poisoned confection with Madame Varlville.

After Leon had been in his ambush for nearly half an hour, he began to think that Adrian might already be in the house.

"He may have come home while I was in the act of poisoning the confections," thought Leon.

And then a cold sweat of guilty terror saturated his skin, as he reflected that perhaps Adrian had seen him at his devilish work, and was then examining into the matter.

This guilty fear almost caused the young assassin to fall from his perch.

As he could see Madame Varlville in her room reading, he resolved to wait until he should learn whether Adrian was in the house or not.

"If Adrian was in the house, and did see me," he thought, "it will not be long before he hurries to speak with Madame Varlville."

After a time he saw Madame Varlville lay aside her book and leave her room. She, not aware that either of her grandsons was absent, went to Adrian's room.

Not finding him there, she went to Leon's room. Not finding Leon there, she returned to Adrian's room, resolved to await his coming, as she supposed he would soon be at home.

She took a volume from his bookcase, seated herself near the table on which the confection was, and began to read. From time to time she ate of the sliced orange, and sipped of the sangaree.

The reader is aware how the poison at last affected her.

Meanwhile Leon waited eagerly to hear something by which he might form a correct idea of what was going on in the mansion.

And at the same time Adraste Scipian was also watching the mansion from the opposite side of the street, hidden in the clump of fig-trees, as we informed the reader in the second chapter of our story.

Adraste Scipian—who was Don Sebastian, as the reader is aware—expected that the poison was to be put into the confections on this night, and was confident, as he lurked in the fig grove, that the poisonous extract would not kill those who might partake of it; and knew well what the effect of the poison would be. His chief desire in permitting Perez to deceive Leon, so that the latter should administer the poison, was through the effect of that poison to gain charge and treatment of the poisoned persons; and to so win the confidence of Madame Varlville by speedily restoring her to health, that he should be well able to fix the accusation of the crime upon Mercita, and then persuade Madame Varlville to sell her privately to Père Dominique, to be carried to Cuba.

But events did not all occur in keeping with the wishes of Adraste Scipian.

Leon, from his perch in the tree, and after waiting a long time impatiently after he had seen Madame Varlville leave her bedroom, at last heard a wild scream within the mansion.

This scream was uttered by Mercita, as she discovered the insensible and apparently dead form of Madame Varlville lying upon the floor of Adrian's room, as the reader has heard Mercita inform her mistress, in the first chapter of our story.

When this scream fell upon Leon's ear he trembled and felt sick. He was terrified, and could scarcely retain his place of ambush.

"Perhaps Adrian has just told Madame Varlville of my intended crime!" he thought, not at all sure that Adrian had not witnessed it. "She is horrified, and screams!"

But it was not long before he saw several of the household bearing the form of his grandmother into her room, and place it upon her bed.

He looked in vain for Adrian, and amid the clamor of servants' voices in the bedroom, he heard one say, in reply to another:

"Master Leon is not in the city. He said at noon he expected to go to Mobile. But Master Adrian's boy says Master Adrian is at the theatre."

A little more keen listening assured Leon that Madame Varlville had just been found dead or dying on the floor of Adrian's room.

"She must have eaten of the poison there by herself," thought Leon, who dared not now attempt to descend from his ambush, as servants were running about here and there in the yard below him, as many were sent off in search of medical aid.

"Were any one to see me getting away," he thought, "I should be suspected of course. I must remain where I am for a time. All must believe that I departed for Mobile soon after dinner to-day. I can escape from the premises during the night, and hide as long as I like in the hut in the swamp. Joseph will keep me well informed. If the doctors detect poison, it will be found that the confection in my room is also poisoned. Suspicion will not point at me, but at Adrian and Mercita."

He remained in his hiding-place for hours. He saw and heard much that passed during that time in the bedroom of Madame Varlville.

He saw the four white physicians, and heard them say, "The lady is dead. We can do nothing for her—nothing can be done for her. She was very old, and death came upon her suddenly, as it often does to the very old."

"So," thought Leon, "there is no suspicion of poison yet."

He saw the Voodoo doctor, Adraste Scipian, in the room, and he heard what he said to Adrian Dudley. He expected to see the other supposed Voodoo doctor, Joseph, who had told him that he would be with Adraste Scipian.

But the pretended mulatto was not in the house. Yet Perez was not far off, and was concealed in the shrubbery of the yard.

Perez had seen Leon make his secret exit from the mansion, and had been surprised to see him climb the tree instead of reëntering the mansion openly, as had been agreed upon by Leon and himself.

"It is safer for me not to be seen," thought Perez, "since Leon de Vargas has not followed my plan. I will watch Leon de Vargas. Something has gone wrong."

Long before daylight Leon glided from his lurking place and directed his steps toward the swamp.

He was followed by Perez, and when the latter judged it safe to reveal himself he called out in a deep whisper:

"Monsieur!"

Leon was on the verge of the swamp, just where the path that led most directly to the hut began.

The voice sounded almost in his ear, so closely and cautiously had Perez followed him.

He turned in guilty terror, drawing his dagger as he did so.

"I am Joseph, Monsieur," said Perez quickly.

"Ah!" replied Leon; and he sat down upon the ground, weak as a sick child, from guilty terror.

"What has happened in the mansion, Monsieur?"

"She is dead."

"Who, Monsieur?"

"Madame Varlville."

"From the poison, Monsieur?"

"Sh! Not so loud. Let us to the hut. We can talk there. You are sure of the old negro?"

"Perfectly, Monsieur. But we are safe here to talk," said Perez, who was eager to hear all.

"No. Let us go to the hut," persisted Leon. "It is there that I wish to conceal myself for a day—perhaps for a week, or more. Come," and he turned into the swamp.

Perez followed him.

"Diablos!" thought Perez. "It is well to know all that he can tell me. To-morrow I can hear something more from the Russians."

On entering the hut they found old Juan apparently in a deep sleep in the rude bed he always slept in at night. The hut contained but one room. The floor was of hard clay, and in the fireplace a few embers were glowing red amid the mass of gray ashes and black coals.

"Juan!" said Perez, in a loud voice, and giving the old fellow a rough shake.

To this Juan replied with a snort and a snore, and a writhing under his blanket; no more.

"The old fellow is in a drunken sleep, Monsieur," said Perez. "He often goes to bed drunk. Here is his canteen, nearly empty. You see, he had not even closed the door of the hut. Some night a panther or a bear will come in and devour him. I have told him so often, the careless old fool!"

Leon de Vargas, in a mood of guilty gloominess, sat down upon a roughly made stool and glared at the red embers.

Perez sat down in an humble posture upon the earthen floor near him, and waited for him to speak.

"How was it," said Leon suddenly, "that you did not go in with Adraste Scipian? I saw him in there."

"Monsieur, as you did not return into the mansion after I saw you leave it secretly, I thought you had decided upon some plan of your own, and so I remained quiet."

"Since you saw me leave the house secretly, others may have seen me also," said Leon, alarmed.

"No, Monsieur. I know that no one saw you. Only I knew how and at about what time you were to leave it. Even Adraste Scipian, who was in the fig grove opposite the mansion, could not have seen you. Adraste Scipian, as I have repeatedly told Monsieur, has been led to suspect only that Mercita has long had a design to poison Madame Varlville, yourself, and Adrian Dudley. I have made him believe that, and that I had discovered that she was about to make the attempt last night with a poison she had obtained from old Juan. But, Monsieur, what happened to cause you to change the plan?"

Leon, wholly in the dark as regarded the knowledge of Adraste Scipian, told Perez all that he had seen and heard while he was in his ambush.

"So Monsieur Adrian was absent, and escaped the poison, Monsieur," said Perez, who was already aware of that fact, which he had ascertained while the Varlville servants were hurrying in alarm for aid.

"Yes; and though the four physicians declared that Madame Varlville was dead beyond all doubt, that Adraste Scipian told Adrian she was not, and that he could restore her to health within a week."

"It is clear, Monsieur, that you must remain concealed, and supposed to have gone to Mobile, until we are certain that no suspicion of poison is abroad, or likely to get abroad."

"It is best, in any case," replied Leon, "that I shall really go to Mobile, for the fact that Madame Varlville was poisoned will get out. Adraste Scipian, for the purposes of Père Dominique, you say, is eager to fasten such a charge upon Mercita."

"That is true, Monsieur, and he will, I have no doubt."

"So much the better for me, except that the paper which I gave Mercita may be seen by others."

"As to that, Monsieur, Adraste Scipian has promised me to secure that paper for me. It will be of no use to him, nor to Père Dominique. And, Monsieur, I myself will see to that. Yes, Monsieur, it will be best for you to really go to Mobile, and to be seen there by those who know you. It will be proved—if the matter comes before the judges—that the confection intended for you was also poisoned. I do not believe that Adraste Scipian imagines that he can restore life to Madame Varlville. He has told that to Adrian Dudley only to have free access to the mansion for a time—such time as he may need to get possession of Mercita. No doubt he was much disconcerted in not finding all as I had led him to suspect."

"And what had you led Adraste Scipian to expect?" demanded Leon; but not suspiciously, for he blindly trusted his supposed mulatto kinsman.

"Ah, Monsieur, that Adrian Dudley, as well as Madame Varlville, was to be poisoned, and you also, Monsieur, by the negress Mercita. That you, ill, but able to give orders, would, being prompted by me, command Mercita to be arrested at once. That the poison—so I told him—would not kill any one, but make all three very sick—though to speak truly, Monsieur, he was indifferent whether the poison should be fatal in the end or not. And, as events are, Monsieur, you will do well to depart immediately for Mobile. Your sailboat is at the Lake shore, and within three hours you can be on your way. Having shown yourself to your friends and acquaintances in Mobile, return to this hut to confer with me. If Madame Varlville is dead, the estate is as much yours as Adrian Dudley's; and perhaps, Monsieur, you may return to find him as well as Mercita under arrest for having poisoned Madame Varlville, and having attempted to poison you. A few days will determine all."

After conversing upon the matter for some time longer, Perez and Leon left the hut—the former to see the latter started on the route for Mobile, and then himself to return to the dwelling of Père Dominique in the city.

Perez was vexed and disappointed. The affair had not advanced as he had planned it, and it was necessary to keep Leon de Vargas [illegible]

"Diablos!" thought Perez as he accompanied Leon toward the Lake. "He is after all a coward. He dares not face his deeds. Were he to be suddenly accused now of this affair he would confess all, and cause my arrest—my destruction. I must take care that he shall not return too soon. And I must watch the two Russians also—and Adrian Dudley, who knows an Angelique exactly like my Angelique. And I must know all that the negress Mercita knows of 'Isadora Raymundo'—a million maledictions on 'Isadora Raymundo.'"

About quarter of an hour after Perez and Leon had left the hut, old Juan lifted his bald pate cautiously and looked around slyly. Then he sat up in bed and listened. Then he got up and left the hut, and made a wide circuit of reconnoitre around it. All this without uttering, or even muttering a word.

Satisfied that no one was near, he reëntered the hut, refreshed himself with a long and steady drink from his canteen, sat down upon a stool, and said, with much briskness:

"No biznis ob mine! No biznis ob mine! No, sah! But it 'pears to dis old colored hidalgo dat de cappen done gone heabily into de pizen trade!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CAPTAIN CÆSAR.

While Banks was in the Valley, and after Pope had assumed command of the army, the black servants of one of the brigades formed a company on their own hook, promising, should occasion offer, to perform wonders in the way of vengeance upon their former oppressors. There were sixteen in the company at the start. They elected a captain, two lieutenants, four sergeants, and eight corporals, which left only one man in the ranks as a private, and this solitary private, from the arduous and debasing duties put upon him, soon became so demoralized that they were forced to discharge him.

Cæsar, a contraband who had been picked up at Winchester, and who was servant to Capt. Whitmarsh, of the 10th Maine, was elected Captain. He was a stout fellow, and black as the ace of spades, and when his master allowed him to sport a black feather in his hat, and to wear a cavalry sabre strapped upon his hip, he was a sight to behold.

"Wait!" said Captain Cæsar, with a grand flourish of his somewhat tarnished blade, "jus' you wait till we git a chance at dem ar' Rebs. Golly! won't we sock it to 'um!"

And his compatriots of the well-officered company echoed his promise with enthusiasm. They only wanted the chance, that was all!

By and by came the battle of Cedar Mountain—short, sharp, and bloody. In the rear of the position of Crawford's Brigade were several large stacks of hay. The Tenth Maine particularly did heroic work on that day; but during the action the company of Captain Cæsar was not to be seen. When our troops fell back, however, the black patriots crawled out from beneath the haystacks and joined lustily in the retreat.

That evening Capt. Whitmarsh spoke with his servant concerning his conduct during the fight.

"How is this, Cæsar?" he demanded. "They tell me you and your men were hid under the hay all the time."

"Cap'n Whitmarsh," replied Cæsar, with a sad shake of the head, "I am berry sorry to be 'bliged to say it am de truff. I done eb'ry t'ing I could. I 'pealed to de men wid tears in my eyes. I 'pealed to dar pat'r'tism,—I tole 'em de eyes ob de nashun was on 'em,—I ax'd 'em what hope dey could hab in dis world, or in de nex', ef dey flunked now. I—I—fairly went mad wid teasin' dem fellers to come out ob dat, an' go in. But, Cap'n, as sure's you 're born, dey would stay on de wrong side ob dem stacks."

"And what did you do, Cæsar?"

"Me?" said Cæsar, straightening up, and smiting his breast with his huge fist. "What does any commander do 'at hab duty in his heart? Didn't I hear de bullets whizzin, an' de shells screamin'—an' didn't I know dar was danger? Couldn't I smell it in de a'r? Should I desert my command in a time like dat? *Nebber!* NEBBER! *I stuck by 'em, sah! I stuck by 'em!*" C.

JUST TO GET RID OF HER.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"O dear, I am so tired, so *very* tired! toiling all day, and often half the night, for barely enough to keep soul and body together. I must endeavor to find something that pays better than this ceaseless stitching. Four long weeks, and I've made less than twenty dollars. But here comes mother; I must chase away this weary look."

Notwithstanding the smile which welcomed Mrs. Ashley's entrance, the mother could not fail to see that her little Katie was looking really miserable. Six months' constant confinement had made a manifest change in the merry, rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed girl. So young a heart to be burdened with much care! No wonder smiles had fled and roses paled under it.

Mr. Ashley had been a government clerk, and lived up to every cent of his slender income; just managing to keep up a genteel appearance, and send Katie to an excellent school, intending to fit her for a teacher. But ere this was accomplished, Mr. Ashley died suddenly, and the little family were left entirely destitute. Mrs. Ashley was an invalid; she could help in no way to support her little family. So poor Katie, when only sixteen, was forced to leave her studies and put her shoulder to the wheel. A sewing machine was purchased, and bravely she went to work.

At the time of Mr. Ashley's death, many of his friends came forward with assistance. Katie was assured that she should get a position in one of the Departments. Some of the most influential of her father's friends went to work for that purpose. But up to the time our story commences, Katie had nothing to encourage the hopes raised.

Mrs. Ashley gazed in silence for some time on her child, her heart filled with alarm at the change a few months had made. At length she said:

"Katie, love, this will never do. You must not work so constantly. Get your hat and go take a walk. And, my child—" She hesitated. "Well, I've been thinking that possibly, if you would try yourself, and not depend on friends, you might get a position. I should think General Looms, if he knew you, would give you work. He knew your father well. Go and ask him, Katie."

"Oh, mother, it would not be a particle of use. I do not believe he would look at me a second time. You know I am not handsome, and I have nothing about me to produce a favorable impression at first sight. Folks like me after they know me. But General Looms would never care to know *me*, when he has so many beautiful women about him all the time."

"Kate, you have no confidence in yourself. You are so sensitive and retiring. I'm sure, if you would only make yourself known, and tell our necessities to General Looms—"

"What about the General, mother? I know him by sight, and to speak to a little. And he is a fine old gentleman, I think," said Walter Ashley, a boy of ten years, who had entered the room and caught the last part of his mother's remark.

"How, or rather where, did you meet him, Walter?" asked Katie.

"Why, I see him most every afternoon up where we go fishing. Well, it would do you good to see him when he has fine luck. I believe he would sooner draw up black bass than greenbacks," Walter answered.

"Oh, Walter, some time when he is in such a good-humor, could not you tell him who you are, and ask him to give me something to do?" Katie asked, in a tone and manner half serious, half in fun.

"Now, as if he would mind what a boy said! No, Katie, you come and go with me. Ladies often come up to the fishing ground. Yes, indeed they do! Then when he looks pleasant enough, you ask him yourself," said Walter.

"Oh, I never could muster up sufficient courage."

"Well, come with me any how. I am going now. Perhaps, when you see him, you'll find he is not such a frightful somebody," Walter urged.

"Yes, do, dear. I think Walter's idea is very good. Go, at any rate. The change will do you good."

"Yes, mother, I'll go, and try to ask him. I feel truly I cannot stand this constant confinement very long," Katie said, then putting aside her work, and preparing to go with Walter.

They were soon after on their way to the fishing ground. When in sight of the place, Walter said, "The General is not there, but he will come by and by, I guess. I'm glad we are first. I'll get a good position."

Thinking only then of the sport he was after, the boy busied himself with his tackle. Soon his line was dropped, and a few moments after, Katie saw him draw it up, with a triumphant exclamation.

"What a beauty! Oh, there comes the General. An't I glad he didn't get here before. He would have caught this. Now, watch him, Katie, I must to business. I'm going to have a brisk time, I think."

Then in a lower tone, as the General came near, Walter said:

"He will come right up here beside you, I guess, for he most always sits just about here."

Kate raised her eyes to the approaching form timidly an instant—but an instant only; for surely there she found nothing to encourage a longer gaze.

General Looms looked decidedly cross. And the expression changed not for the better during the two hours the poor girl sat and watched.

"No, no," she thought. "There is nothing about him to bid me speak."

Then at last, tired and disheartened, she coaxed Walter to return home.

"What luck?" asked Mrs. Ashley, meeting them at the door.

"Splendid! See what a feast!" exclaimed Walter. He had quite forgotten the real purpose of Katie's going.

"Oh, Walter, mother means something of more importance than your fish," Katie said, with a reproachful look at Walter, adding, "No good luck for me, mamma. I could not dare to speak to him. He looked awfully cross."

"Well, that's so. He did. I never saw him so before. But the fish did not bite for him. I guess that was the reason," said Walter.

"No. He looked cross and annoyed when he first came in sight. I noticed particularly," Katie answered.

"I'm sure I cannot imagine why. Only I never saw him in such a humor before. But don't give up, Katie. Try again. Something, either at the office or home, must have annoyed him. Of course you nor I had anything to do with his cross looks," said Walter.

"I will try, but I have not the faintest hope of success," Katie answered, in a tremulous voice.

Day after day, when Walter returned from school, she would put aside her work and accompany him, returning to the anxious mother ever with the same despondent look on her pale face.

Twelve days passed thus. To Walter it was beyond comprehension. He declared that always before the General looked pleasant, sometimes he was really jovial, and on two or three occasions had spoken with much kindness to him.

"I declare, Katie, it is the strangest thing I ever knew. From the time he comes in sight, he looks cross, and grows more so until he or we leave," Walter said.

"Then I will not go any more. I believe I must have something to do with his changed humor."

"Oh, nonsense, Kate. I never meant to imply anything of that kind. Of course, as I told you before, neither you nor I have anything to do with it. Come on. The change from sitting over this old machine is good for you; so come. If the General never smiles again, we won't care," Walter said. And Mrs. Ashley urged:

"Yes, do. This will be the thirteenth time. Some people say that is a fatal number. With me it has ever been different. Go. I am sure something will turn up this afternoon. I feel it."

"Something! Well, anything will be better than this uncertainty," Katie murmured, kissing her mother, and following Walter, who called out:

"Hurry up, Katie! I want to be up there early, and get my place. We have managed to keep that spot all these days, and I've had splendid luck there."

"It is going to rain, I fear. See how cloudy it is; I had better stay home."

"No, no. Bring the umbrella. Don't you know how much better the fish bite such days, Kate?"

Again they arrived in time to secure the fine place for Walter's sport. And Katie began her watchful, wistful gaze. It was not long before the familiar form came in sight, nearer and nearer, until the poor girl could plainly see the same old look. And it really seemed to her he uttered an angry, impatient exclamation.

General Looms stopped not at his accustomed place, but came right up to where they sat. Planting his rod into the soil in the vicinity of Katie, he looked at her a few seconds, and then said, in a not very amiable tone:

"I did think you would have stayed home such an afternoon. It is a pity your mother has not something else for you to do. Can't *you* find anything more profitable to be about?"

Poor Katie, trembling with fright, stammered:

"No, sir."

Before she could control her emotion sufficiently to say anything more, the General exclaimed:

"Then I can. Do you write a fair hand? Can you count rapidly? But you can learn, if you do not already. Listen to me. Come to my room to-morrow morning, and I'll put you to work, and keep you so busy you will be glad to rest, and not come here every afternoon."

"Oh, sir, you are so kind, so very kind!" Katie, who had found her voice, exclaimed, growing rosy, and really quite pretty, with the joyous surprise. "How can I thank you?"

"By keeping off my fishing ground. Don't you know, ever since you have been coming here, you've occupied my place? And being a young lady, I could not very well ask you to remove. And so I'll give you an office, to get rid of you," General Looms said, then laughing merrily, and looking as he "used to do," as Walter said.

Katie was so overjoyed and reassured by the pleasant tone and manner of the General, that she told him all about the object of her coming; and the General exclaimed:

"And so you came a fishing for an office! But you used the worst kind of bait, my little girl."

"At any rate, you looked as if *you* would *bite* every time," Katie answered, her eyes dancing merrily.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the General. "I really have felt so. Well, I am truly glad to help the daughter of Mr. Ashley, and delighted to get her off my fishing ground."

Mrs. Ashley was watching for her children's return. As soon as they came in sight, she noticed Katie's quick, light steps, and knew something pleasant had happened.

Katie's arms were soon about her while she told of the splendid luck she had met at last.

"Getting an office without asking for it, mamma. Only think of it!" Katie exclaimed.

"Ah, Katie, the true cause of your success was your extreme diffidence and timidity. You are such a modest, retiring little bird, none but those in the home nest know how lovely you really are," Mrs. Ashley said, with a fond look.

And Walter exclaimed, laughing:

"Please give me the credit of placing her in the true position to *command* success."

A NARROW ESCAPE.

BY ANNA SHEILDS.

In a small, poorly furnished room, in a little cottage situated on the outskirts of the flourishing town of G——, a young girl sat sewing for daily bread. She was very young—not twenty—and she was literally alone in the world. Father, mother, brothers and sisters had all preceded her in the universal pathway to heaven, and if she had relatives more distant she knew nothing of their existence. She had been born to affluence, delicately nurtured, carefully educated, and when she was not quite nineteen had lost, with her father, every dollar of property she had ever hoped to claim by inheritance.

The day was chilly, one of October's clear, cold days that hint of coming winter, and the busy needlewoman was wrapped in a soft white shawl, that softened the effect of the heavy black dress she wore. She was pale from recent illness, but there flitted over her worn face now and again a smile that whispered of some hopeful or happy thought in her heart.

While she sewed a carriage drove up to the door, and a young lady, handsomely dressed in the richest mourning, stepped lightly across the narrow garden path, nodding to the pale seamstress, before she came into the house, and up to her room.

"Sewing?" she said. "Naughty girl! When will you get well if you are so obstinate?"

"I am getting well."

"Prove it by eating some of these grapes, and I will tell you a secret."

The visitor had thrown aside hat and cloak, and was opening a basket of choice fruit and flowers, as she spoke. When she came to sit beside her friend, it was curious to mark the general resemblance they bore to each other, knowing there was no tie of blood between them. Each had brown hair, large brown eyes, soft, clear complexion, and graceful figure, of medium height and size. Each had a low, sweet voice, and the evidence of gentle blood and perfect breeding. Ladies, both of them, though one sewed for a living and one held an inheritance of nearly half a million of money in her own right, as soon as she married or came of age.

As the sick girl ate the grapes, she said, in a low, earnest tone:

"Estelle, you should not have paid Mrs. Martin for my board, yesterday. I have money coming to me for sewing."

"You can pay me again, then. Your worthy landlady seemed so much exercised in her mind, that it was really a Christian duty to ease her."

"But I owe you so much—medicine, delicacies, care. How many nights did you sit by me when I was so very sick!"

"Never mind. You would do the same for me. Do you not love me as much to-day as you did when we shared the tyrannies and advantages of Madame C——'s school together? I wish you would put aside some of your independence, and allow me to really help you."

"Not in money, Estelle."

"As you will. But, Hattie, you will make my *trousseau* for me, will you not?"

"So that is your secret!"

"That is my secret. Nobody knows it yet, but I am soon to be married. I am so lonely, Hattie. Everybody that belongs to me is dead, excepting Aunt Fannie, and I am so rich that I think nobody loves me for myself, excepting Harry Munroe."

"Harry Munroe!" Hattie said, turning white to her lips.

"I really believe he loves me for myself alone," Estelle said. "He is not poor, and he is so good!"

"And you love him very much?" Hattie asked.

"No; yet I respect him, and love will come. Do you know him Hattie?"

"I work for him. That bundle upon the bed, for which I am to receive six dollars, is work for Mr. Munroe."

"Does he pay you well?"

"The usual price. Estelle, will you do me one great favor?"

"Certainly I will."

"Take that bundle of work home for me, and wear my bonnet and shawl. Keep your vail down. Estelle, do this for me!"

Estelle looked in surprise at the eager white face raised to hers.

"I will call John," she said.

"No, no. Your coachman will not do. Leave your carriage here, and take the bundle. Wear my bonnet."

"You want me," said Estelle slowly, "to go to Mr. Munroe's store for you, in your dress, with your work, to personate you?"

"Yes, yes!"

"You have some good reason?"

"Indeed, indeed I have."

"I will go then. It is nearly dusk, but I have not far to go."

It would be hard to say which of the young girls was most agitated, as Estelle dressed herself in the shabby shawl and bonnet, and started with the bundle of work. When the door was closed after her, Hattie threw herself on her knees by her bedside, praying, with streaming eyes:

"Help me, Heavenly Father, to bear it. Save her, and keep my heart from breaking!"

And as she prayed, Estelle hurried along the streets, full of anxious pain and vain speculations.

Entering the store in the dim twilight, she found no lamps burning, and was directed by the clerk to the back of the store. Here, busily engaged in tying up some goods, a tall, handsome man of about thirty looked up as she approached.

"Miss Frank with some work," the clerk said, and went back to his place at the front of the store.

The handsome owner of the large establishment dropped his bundles, and leaned over the counter.

"Hattie," he said, in a low, *loving* voice, "where have you been for weeks?"

"I have been ill," Estelle said, steadying her voice by a great effort.

"Ill! Why have you not sent me word? You know I have not your address. Ill! My darling, you cannot guess how anxious I have been."

"Have you been anxious?"

"Can you doubt it?" he said reproachfully. "You are weak still; your hand trembles on the counter. I will see you home."

Estelle bowed her head in mute assent, and in a few moments they were in the fast darkening streets together.

Into the ear that could scarcely believe its own hearing, Harry Munroe poured a love story of anxiety and trouble, till Estelle spoke.

"But," she said, "I heard you were to marry the heiress, Estelle Murray."

An oath in a low whisper answered her, before the tender voice replied:

"Who could have told you such an absurd tale? She is a friend, and her custom is quite an object to me, so that I am forced to pay her some attention. That is all."

"You do not love her then?"

"I love no one but you, Hattie. Surely you should know that."

"This is my home," she answered, opening the little garden gate. "Will you come in?"

Together they entered the little parlor, and saying she would return when she removed her bonnet, Estelle left Harry Munroe and went to Hattie's room.

"You have saved *me*," she said abruptly, as she threw aside the bonnet, with its long crape vail. "Now tell me about yourself."

"It is not a very long story," Hattie answered.

"My poor, pale darling!" Estelle cried, as her friend broke down, sobbing bitterly, "you love him?"

"Oh, Estelle, he has been so kind since father died; they were engaged in some business speculations together, and he was always trying to hold father back from the unfortunate investments that ruined him. After he died Harry gave me work, and was very kind, very— Oh, Estelle, I believed so firmly in his love and honor, that present burdens were all light to bear, thinking of the happy future as his wife."

"Yet he never visited you?"

"No. After we sold the old house I came here unknown to him. Mrs. Martin is our old washerwoman, and she gave me a room, but—it was a silly pride, Estelle—I did not want him to come to this poor place, after knowing me so long in our old home."

"Will you see him now?"

"Is he here?"

"Yes; but you are not fit to meet him. I will go down."

Harry Munroe had studied all the objects in the little parlor by the light of a dim kerosene lamp, and was wondering what could detain Hattie so long, when there entered at the parlor door a composed little lady, who spoke in a tone clear, cold and sharp as icicles, saying:

"Mr. Munroe, when I inform you that Hattie Frank is a dear friend, an old schoolmate, that hid herself from me in her poverty, and was found again only a few weeks ago, when she was ill; when I tell you that I carried home her work this evening, and was your companion in your walk here, you will scarcely be surprised that I return your ring, and inform you that your visits will in future be unwelcome both to me and to her. Good-evening."

He was alone again before he had time to utter a word, and Estelle, returning to her friend, found her in a fainting fit. Another long illness followed, but Estelle kept faithful watch until her nursing was rewarded by the convalescence of her patient.

When Hattie was able to sit up again, Estelle said to her:

"I want your forgiveness, Hattie, for taking unwarrantable liberties with your private affairs while you were ill."

"You have it. What have you been doing?"

"I was looking into the little black trunk in the corner, for some articles of clothing, and lifted the tray."

"There is nothing there but poor father's private papers."

"Which I took the liberty of handing over to my guardian, who is a lawyer. I was quite convinced from what you told me that there was some foul play regarding your father's property. My suspicions were correct; and among the papers were such strong proofs of Harry Munroe's villainy, that he was glad to compromise, and leave the place. So, my dear, when you are able to attend to your own affairs, you will find fifty thousand dollars in the Good Will Bank, subject to your order."

"Fifty thousand dollars!"

"Undoubtedly you are entitled to more, but my guardian thought it advisable to avoid the expense and trouble of a lawsuit, and Mr. Munroe was only too glad to meet him half way."

"He has gone, you say."

"Yes, he has gone. He probably intended to gain possession of your father's papers through his pretended love for you, but defeated his own aim by his over-eagerness to become master of my money. Do you feel satisfied, Hattie?"

"Only dissatisfied to think how poorly I can ever thank you and your guardian."

"And you will come and make me a long, long visit, until you have a home of your own?"

"You know that I will. Oh, Estelle, Estelle, what an escape we have had!"

"A narrow escape!" Estelle said gravely.

—In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert religion and morality, those great pillars of human happiness, those firmest props of the duties of men and citizens.

THE HUNGERS.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

There is a hunger of the frame,
Fed to preserve the mortal flame
  Till frame and spirit part:
Without it, where the triumphs here
For man upon this natal sphere,
  In hall or field or mart?

There is a hunger of the mind
To know all through Creation shrined,
  Till in another clime:
Without it, where the glory wrought
Within Humanity by Thought
  So fed and made sublime?

There is a hunger yet, how vast
Within the Present as the Past,
  And never more to die:
That of all hungers oftener craves,
Unbound by flame or earth or waves;
That has the tenderest desire,
And in its sacredest of fire
  Yearns for the very sky.
Without it, here could be no grace
With strength, no real Human face,
  For love would brutal be;
Impossible for aught divine,
No God, no sense of Right, no Shrine,
  One dark, fierce, weltering sea.

Bless Heaven for this hunger—bless
That in its boundless tenderness
  All can have deathless part!
'Twas fed through all the Centuries long,
And must be while the latest throng:
And answered perfectly will be
By Love's and Friendship's ministry
When dweller in Eternity—
  The Hunger of the *Heart!*

* * *

THE RIVAL SISTERS.

By ELIZA A. DUPUY,

AUTHOR OF THE "EVIL GENIUS," THE "WHITE TERROR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE MESHES CLOSING AROUND THE IMPOSTOR.

The bridal morning arose serene and cloudless, and Marion prayed fervently that it might be a type of the new life on which she was about to enter.

A note had been sent to Mrs. De Lorme on the previous evening, apprising her of Spencer's arrival, and requesting her to come over to Le Bocage with her daughters by two o'clock, as that was the hour appointed for the ceremony. At three, dinner was to be served; and at five, the steamer on which Herbert had engaged passage, was expected to be at the landing.

Marion and Clarice had become good friends in a few hours' acquaintance, and the young girl petitioned to be allowed to assist in preparing her for the momentuous event about to take place. The bride smilingly acceded, and said:

"You shall put the finishing touch to my toilet, by twining living orange blossoms in my hair. In the conservatory there is a tree in bloom, and if you wish to do anything for me, Clarice, the best service will be for you to gather them yourself."

"Oh, that I will gladly do, for I have not yet explored the conservatory, and I am a passionate lover of flowers."

She sprang away, elated with the thought of being of use, and some of her old gladness came back to her young heart as she walked among the plants, examining their condition, and inhaling the perfume of the few that were in bloom.

She had filled her basket with the fragrant orange blossoms, and was about to leave the place, when her steps were arrested by the sound of a voice calling her name. It was Zulieme, who had been on the watch for an opportunity to speak with her.

She was standing at the door of the conservatory, which opened upon the garden, and Clarice cast a half-startled glance at the tall figure and strange face. But she knew this must be one of the old family servants, and she returned to meet Zulieme as she advanced a few steps. With graceful sweetness the child said:

"I cannot remember you, but I was such a little thing when I was taken away that you can hardly expect me to do that. Tell me your name, if you please."

"I am Zulieme, Miss Clarice, and I used to wait on your ma. A nice, sweet lady she was; and I was very fond of you when you was a little baby. I've been waiting for a chance to see you afore I go away, for I'm to leave with Miss Marion to-day."

"But how is that, Zulieme? I remember your name, for I have often heard papa speak of you as housekeeper here, and he had such confidence in your management that I have heard him say things were sure to go right as long as you were in charge of the house. How can my sister bear to part with you?"

"It was Miss Estelle's will that I should go, and of course I had to do what she wanted. I nursed her too, but she don't seem to remember 'bout that. I thought it was very hard at first, but I've made up my mind to the change, and I dare say it will be best for us all. 'Sides, she has a reason, I s'pose, though I'm sure my mother never did what they charges to her."

Clarice tried to learn what Zulieme referred to, but the woman would not tell her. The child, however, promised to interest herself in Zulieme's fate, and ask Estelle to let her—Clarice—keep her for her own servant.

She took up her basket of flowers and flitted away, and after putting her flowers in water till the time for using them came, went to Sylvia and asked her for the key of her father's room.

"Well, I clar, it's de fust time anybody have wanted to go in thar," said the girl, as Clarice walked off with the key.

It was yet early in the day. Herbert and Mr. Glenn had gone out with Miss Lyman for a walk. Marion was in her own room, attended by Zelma to assist her in packing, and Hester had thrown herself upon her sofa and was sleeping lightly, for her wakefulness on the previous night had given her a weary, listless feeling which she wished to get over before the arrival of Mrs. De Lorme.

Clarice drew near and looked down on her with loving eyes. She presently stooped over and kissed her gently on her brow. Light as the touch was, it aroused the sleeper, and her eyes flashed open with an expression that startled the child. For one instant there was aversion and anger in their glance, which seemed to ask:

"Am I never to be free from interruption from *you?*"

"Oh, sister, I did not mean to disturb you. Why do you look so strange? I declare your eyes frighten me," said Clarice, with a slight shiver.

Hester vailed her tell-tale orbs beneath their long sweeping lashes, and dreamily said:

"Is it you, my darling? It is a happy awakening for me, for a terrible vision was passing before me. I thought an angel and a fiend were struggling to get possession of me, and the dark spirit was about to conquer when your gentle caress awoke me, and lo! the sweetest of all angels—a tender and loving sister—was beside me."

"Then you did not mean that look of repulsion for me? You cannot think how it chilled me through. But never mind that now. Come with me to papa's room, that together we may look upon him, with your mother and mine beside him."

The brow of Hester contracted, and after a moment's silence, during which Clarice wistfully watched her, she said:

"I have avoided that room since I came hither, for I felt as if my heart would break if I looked on the pictured face of the father who was so cruelly snatched from us. But I will not refuse your petition, Clarice. I must go in there some day with you, and as well on this as on any other; only let the painful visit be over as soon as possible."

"I will not ask you to go there again, if you do not like it, but now I wish you to show me the way," said Clarice timidly.

"After the first shock is over, I dare say I shall wish to visit that room as often as you will. Come, dear; we have no time to lose, for we must get over the excitement before it is time to dress."

Hester took the key from Clarice, and preceded her down the lateral hall, which, with the main one, divided the house into four suits of apartments,. The room they were seeking was in the rear of the parlors, and the windows looked out on the flower-garden, which lay behind the conservatory. On opening the door, the two who entered found everything arranged as if such a visit had been anticipated.

Armand Landry, in all his dark and stately beauty, looked down upon them with smiling eyes, and so lifelike was the picture that for an instant Hester shivered at the wild thought that the mobile lips might unclose and denounce her to the child that stood beside her.

The two fair women beside him were lovely types of Saxon beauty, though the first Mrs. Landry looked far more mature than her successor. The portrait had been painted nearly a year after her marriage; but the second wife wore her bridal robes, and the sweet charm of girlhood yet lingered on her brow and upon her smiling lips.

Clarice riveted her eyes on this fresh and radiant face, trying while gazing on it to gain courage to look upon that of the father whose fearful fate was yet a horror to her. Hester's eyes wandered to the face of the woman who had rivalled her mother, and met her fate at her ruthless hands. She was not touched by its pensive loveliness, for the shadow of death had begun to settle over Mrs. Landry when that picture was painted, and in the dread that he might lose the original, her husband had insisted that she should sit to the distinguished artist who did such justice to her charms.

Hester recalled the terrible story her mother had told her on that soft summer night, and an expression came into her face which startled and bewildered Clarice when she turned suddenly to speak to her.

"Dear sister, why do you look so? That is *your* mother on whom you are gazing, yet one might think she was your most deadly enemy from the expression of your eyes."

"I was not thinking of her, Clarice, but—of something that cannot be told to you. Don't watch me, child, or comment on my looks, for I cannot endure it. I am not well—I am dreadfully nervous, as you might have seen from my manner since you came here. You said you had a request to make of me; what is it? If I can grant it, of course I will."

The manner was so abrupt that Clarice almost feared to put forward the petition she had to make; but she plucked up courage, and said:

"I thought I would ask you here, where papa is looking down on us, and when you remember how highly he estimated the woman in whose favor I am going to plead, I thought that you would hardly refuse my request."

"What on earth are you driving at, child? Has any one here dared to complain to you of me, and ask your intervention? I hope you are not going to set yourself up in opposition to me, Clarice, for I am the best judge of what is to be done with those who are dependent on me, and what you know of my past life ought to give you the assurance that I am incapable of committing an unjust or cruel act."

Clarice flushed slightly, and replied:

"I have no idea of doing anything of which you can complain, Estelle, but you are not like you used to be, and I don't know what you may do. The person I wished to speak of is Zulieme. I saw her, and talked with her in the conservatory. I was very much surprised to hear that she and her son are to go away to-day with Mr. Spencer. I have heard papa say that he would never hire out a servant, and this woman is one he trusted above others. I do not think she should be sent away from the place on which she has always lived, and I wish to keep her for my own waiting-woman. That is my request."

The pride of the race from which she sprung shone in the face of the young speaker, and her voice was perfectly steady, though she was wounded to the soul by the words that had been spoken to her by lips which had never before uttered a harsh or unkind word to her.

Hester recovered self-control while she was speaking. She quietly said:

"Did Zulieme ask you to do this, Clarice? Did she express any unwillingness to go with Mrs. Oliver?"

"No, she declared herself satisfied with the change; but when I told her I would ask you to allow her to stay as my attendant, her face showed how glad she would be to do so."

"Zulieme has been spoiled by having unlimited control here so long, and I choose to be the mistress of my own house. I am sorry, Clarice, that I cannot grant the first favor you have asked of me since you came, but there are reasons that cannot be explained to so young a child as you why it is best for her to go."

"You are as mysterious as she was, and I hate to be kept in the dark about a thing I have the right to know as well as you. What is it? What has she done that causes her to be banished? If you refuse what I have asked, you should at least explain the ground of your refusal."

"What did she say to you that appeared mysterious? I should like to know if she suspects the true reason of her removal."

"She said something about her mother that I could not understand. She declared that her mother was not guilty of whatever she was accused of. That was the sense of it, though she would not explain of what nature the charge was."

"Since she has dared to say so much, I will do that myself," said Hester, with pale lips and gleaming eyes. "It will be a dreadful thing to reveal to a girl so young as you are, but you leave me no alternative. I must speak out now, or leave you to think me hard and unfeeling in my treatment to my inferiors. You shall hear the truth, Clarice, but I warn you that the revelation will be a terrible one for a sensitive child like you to listen to."

"Then don't tell me, sister. I will take your word, and believe that you did only what you thought best with reference to Zulieme."

"No—you cannot do that unless I explain, as you so earnestly desired me to do a moment since," was the reply, uttered almost sternly. "You have brought this upon yourself, and you must bear it as bravely as you can. You thought I looked strangely at that beautiful mother of mine just now, but if you could have read the thoughts stirring in my soul, you might have interpreted the glance I gave her. I was thinking of her mournful fate, for she was the victim of Zulieme's mother. Look at those languid eyes, the marble pallor of that face, and see in them what I do—the consuming effects of the subtle poison infused into her veins by that demoniac old woman. Knowing this, do you think that I could bear her daughter near me?"

Clarice grew deadly pale, but she did not cry out. The shock had been too great for any ordinary emotion to manifest itself. She only became cold, and shivered through every fibre of her frame. When she could speak, she tremulously said:

"And I—I asked you to keep her near you! Can you forgive me, darling sister, for forcing you to speak of what must be so painful to you?"

"I can forgive anything to you, dear. But let us go now; we have lingered here so long, that I shall only have time to make my toilette before Mrs. De Lorme arrives. She will bring her two daughters with her, and both are young enough to be companions for you. We shall see much of them, for it has been settled that they are to be your fellow pupils."

"You seem to forget that I know them already, sister. I shall be very glad to meet them again, for we had a very pleasant time together in Newport."

Hester bit her lip with vexation at the slight blunder she had made, and putting her hand to her brow, said:

"Since my head was injured, the least excitement seems to daze my brain, and make me forgetful of the commonest things. I hope you will remember all I have gone through, Clarice, and thus find an excuse for any change you may see in me. At times, I cannot control my irritability of temper, and you know that was not once a fault of mine."

CHAPTER XLII.

A TERRIBLE CRISIS.

Clarice went to her room, bathed her face till all traces of tears disappeared, and then went to Marion with the flowers she had gathered for her adornment. She found her dressed in floating folds of tarletan, with bands of satin around the skirt.

Childlike, Clarice soon forgot her trouble in the pleasure of adorning the fair bride, and her deft fingers wove the delicate blossoms among her shining tresses in a most becoming wreath.

"You are charming now," she said, as she surveyed her work; "but I forgot your vail—that should be fastened under the wreath."

"I am a widow, you know, and they do not often wear a vail when they give themselves away a second time. Indeed, I hesitated about being married in white, but Herbert insisted that I should, and of course I gratified him, though I expect to hear some sharp comments on my dress."

"Who is to make them, I wonder? You look beautiful, and no one would think that you have already been married. You must have had a great deal of trouble, Mrs. Oliver, though you look younger than Estelle."

"Trouble—yes, more than you can dream of, or understand, child," and her lips slightly trembled. Recovering from the momentary emotion, she went on: "But it is all over now, and the sun that arose in cloudless majesty this morning was not brighter than the future that I believe lies before me. I am going to make a true marriage now, Clarice, and I feel that the blessing of heaven will be upon it."

"I am sure it will," said the child simply, and she bent and kissed the changing cheek of the bride.

The bustle of an arrival was heard, and Marion quickly said:

"It is Mrs. De Lorme and her daughters. Go out to meet them, dear, for I wish to be alone a few moments."

Clarice went away, thinking:

"She is going to pray for the blessing she spoke of, and I hope it will be hers, for she is a sweet comforter."

When she reached the parlor she found Hester there with her guests, and Clarice was greeted most affectionately by them. In a few moments she felt quite at her ease with Nettie and Lena, though a long time had elapsed since she last saw them.

Hester went to Marion a few moments, and when she returned, Mrs. De Lorme said:

"I suppose I may go in and see the bride; I have brought her a present. Shall I go to her now?"

"Certainly, if you wish it. Zelma will show you to her apartment."

The young negress, in a bright, plain dress which contrasted with the shining blackness of her skin, was in the hall, and at the command of her mistress she led the way to Mrs. Oliver's door, laden with a square box which had been taken from Mrs. De Lorme's carriage.

Marion came forward to meet her visitor, who stooped and kissed her on her brow with some show of affection, and said:

"I have brought a present to you from my children which you may find useful. Nettie wished me to send for a diamond ring, and Lena asked for a set of coral; but I preferred ordering spoons and forks of solid silver, as I thought you would like them best."

"That was very considerate, Mrs. De Lorme, and from the girls I am willing to accept them," said Marion rather coldly.

"But you must also take something from me, my dear," said Mrs. De Lorme, with a sudden change in her voice; and she opened the box which Zelma had placed on a table beside a portfolio which had not then been packed up. She took from it a pair of exquisitely fashioned salt-cellars, lined with gold, and with a kind smile, said:

"I will not fail to take salt from these under your own roof, Marion, and when I do that, our feud shall be buried. Can you not forgive and forget the past, Marion?"

"I have forgiven it," said Marion, offering her hand frankly. "When you come to us, we will give you the warmest welcome, and when you find that I can make Herbert happy, you will fully approve his choice."

"Then you will not refuse my present?"

"I can but accept what is offered in so kind a spirit."

Both ladies had forgotten the presence of Zelma, but at this moment a crash was heard, and the portfolio fell upon the floor, scattering the contents in every direction.

"I 'clar', Miss Oliver, I was only gittin' it out'n the way o' de box," protested Zelma, dropping down on her knees, and beginning to gather the papers up.

In doing so, she turned over the pencil sketch Zulieme had brought to Marion several weeks before, and placed it in such a position that the eyes of Mrs. De Lorme fell at once upon it.

"What is that? Give it to me," she imperiously said.

And Zelma, with a curious gleam in her eyes, lifted the picture and placed it in her hands.

She gave it a vindictive look, and scornfully said:

"It is Hetty Blake, and this was drawn by a silly boy that ought to have known better. How did you come by it, Marion?"

"Zulieme removed it from the room Clarice was to occupy. She came to me to know what was to be done with it, and I thought it best to keep possession of it myself. The drawing is very spirited."

"Umph! Yes, I suppose so. Did you remark how strong the resemblance is between that child and Estelle? If the two have grown up as much alike, it would hardly be possible to distinguish one from the other. Ray used to make himself a dunce about that girl, but luckily she was sent away, and when he met with Estelle years afterward at Newport, he transferred his allegiance to her. Fair men like my son nearly always go crazy after a brilliant brunette."

"Did you know that the two so nearly connected met at the time of that dreadful occurrence? That Estelle was indebted to Mrs. Blake and her daughter for the care she greatly needed?"

Mrs. De Lorme flushed slightly, and said:

"Yes, I know it. How could Armand Landry expose his daughter—the betrothed of my son—to the chances of such a meeting? It was shameful! The very existence of those people should have been kept from her knowledge."

"A fatal chance brought her in contact with them, for Mr. Landry was taking Estelle to Boston, with the intention of returning himself to Blanton, and giving to the girl the money he had set aside for her. I think it was his duty to provide for her."

The presence of Zelma had been ignored while this conversation went on; she was still gathering up the papers on the floor, and her head was bent forward, but if her face had been visible the two ladies must have been struck with the charmed and bewildered expression that had come into it. Her hands trembled, and great drops of perspiration came upon her brow, while her heart beat wildly against her gay boddice.

At that moment Herbert tapped at the door, and called out in his cheery voice:

"Time's up, lady-bird—come out and get ready to enter your new cage."

Mrs. De Lorme opened the door, and he came in, radiant with happiness. After shaking hands with his aunt, he drew the arm of Marion beneath his own, and led her from the room, followed by the elder lady.

Zelma rose up, and staring after them with wide eyes, muttered:

"Ef I wasn't a poor nigger now, wouldn't I make a 'splosion dat 'd blow dis house to flinders? I daren't say a word though, till I find out if dat scar on de young mistis' arm was raly made de way she says it were. She tole me not to talk 'bout it, and dat's 'spicious; but oh, lors! ef I made a fuss, and *she* were de right one arter all, what'd come o' me? Dis chile an't a gwine to do nuffin to git herse'f in sich a hot place as I'd be in den; but I mus' do suffin. I could not live, 'spectin' of sich wickedness, an' not try to find out ef it's true. Oh, lors! oh, lors! I wish I was smart as Aunt Z'lieme. I'd know what to do den; but I 's a dummy, I is."

In the mean time the little party gathered in the front parlor; the words were spoken which gave to Herbert Spencer his heart's desire, and congratulations were offered. Soon afterward the early dinner was announced, and they seated themselves around the elegantly decorated table which Zulieme had assisted in setting out.

At four o'clock they arose from the table, and Marion, attended by Nettie De Lorme and Clarice, went to her room to change her bridal robes for the pretty gray travelling dress prepared for the occasion, while the rest of the party strolled on the gallery, watching for the approach of the expected steamer.

Hester managed to draw Spencer away from the others, and after talking on indifferent subjects a few moments, she said:

"I shall visit you before long, Herbert, and I may spend some time with you and Marion."

"The longer the better," he gayly said. "Nothing could please me better than to have you with us for the winter."

"Oh, *that* will be out of the question. I should not go at all, now that Clarice is here, but for the necessity of consulting a physician, or rather a good surgeon."

Spencer looked at her with sudden fear in his eyes.

"What is it, Estelle? Did you conceal from me any injury you received in that dreadful break down? And have you been secretly suffering from it all this time?"

"Don't scold me, please," she pleadingly said; "but it is true that my shoulder, or rather the upper part of my right arm, was severely hurt. Dr. Macon dressed it, and said it would soon heal; but I suppose I managed it badly, and it will leave an ugly scar. I have concealed it from every one, except the girl that waits on me; but I begin to think it will be best to consult Dr. Pierre about it, and also for attacks of giddiness which seem to paralyze my memory at times."

Spencer regarded her with an appalled expression. He hastily said:

"I have no right to scold you, but I must say that you have tampered with yourself in the most reckless manner. You should have told me of all your injuries, and not so wilfully have insisted on travelling to Boston before you were in a condition to do so with safety. How can I answer to Ray for my guardianship, if anything serious results from this neglect?"

"As to that, I will hold you blameless; you need not look so much alarmed, for I am much better of late—that is, my brain does not suffer so much, and my headaches are less frequent. You can see Dr. Pierre, and send me something for my arm, for it will be impossible for me to go to New Orleans for several weeks yet.

"I am silly, perhaps, but I do not wish any one but you to know what I have just confided to you. I am in no danger, I assure you, so you must let me have my own way, and tell no one, not even Marion, that I am coming down to consult Dr. Pierre. I shall see him at his own rooms, and I am so sensitive as to my condition that I shall not permit him to know who I am."

"But that is nonsense, Estelle. If you are ill enough to require advice, your physician must come to you at my house. That I shall insist on."

"Then I will not go to your house at all. I will run down to the city without your knowledge, see the doctor, and return home the next day; and if you betray what I have told you, our friendship is at an end."

She did not speak pettishly, but with a cold imperiousness that surprised and annoyed Spencer. He regarded her a moment in silence, and then said:

"You have purchased the right to dictate terms to me, and I have no alternative but to submit to your will. I shall not reveal your confidence, and you will be welcome to any home I can call my own as long as I am master of it, come when or how you may."

Hester smiled brightly on him now, and pressing the arm on which she leaned, softly said:

"Thank you, dear Herbert; you are indeed a true friend; but I forbid you to refer to such trifling obligations as you are under to me. You stand to me in the place of a brother; and Marion is as dear to me as if we were of the same blood. I think you have won the sweetest and loveliest of women for your wife."

This was touching Spencer on his weakest point, and his face grew luminous as he listened to the praises of the woman he so tenderly loved. His adroit companion knew that, once on this topic, he would not again refer to the consent to her plans which she had extorted from him.

A few moments later Hester pointed to a dark line of smoke rising above the trees which grew on a point of land that hid from them the approaching steamer.

"There is the herald of separation," she said. "In half an hour the boat will be at the landing. Ah! how much I shall miss my darling Marion; but the thought of her happiness and yours will give me courage to bear my own loneliness."

Spencer pressed her hand warmly, and said:

"To you I owe it that I could so soon claim her for my own, and I will prove how grateful I can be for the sacrifice you have made in giving to me the chosen friend of your heart. I trust that you will be rewarded by the speedy arrival of Raymond, and then, hey for another wedding."

Hester smiled brightly, and replied:

"Yes, when Ray comes he will insist on an immediate marriage, and I shall not have the right to refuse his prayer. I have written to him to complete his tour, but he will disobey me, I know."

"Of course he will, for Ray is no 'laggard in love,' nor in anything else, for he carries everything before him with his impetuosity. I hardly know how your father kept him from marrying you before he was sent away. I suspected once that he had done so, when he came back from Newport so much more tranquil in his mind than when he went away. But I could get nothing out of him to confirm my suspicions, and as *you* have not hinted at such a thing, though you have made me your *confidante*, I suppose I was mistaken."

Hester flushed deeply, and for a moment she was tempted to tell him of the clandestine ceremony which had given Raymond the certainty that no rival could appropriate his betrothed in his absence. But she finally said:

"I may tell you this much. We went through a form of betrothal so solemn that neither of us could have a clear conscience if we broke the tie that unites us. I wear the ring he placed upon my finger, and it will not be removed till he takes it off to replace it on that of his wife."

She pointed to a broad circlet of gold on the third finger of her left hand, and Spencer said:

"So that *is* the ring. Do you know—"

At that moment Marion came out with her young attendants, and, forgetful of everything but her, Spencer broke off abruptly, and Hester did not dream how important to her were the words that remained unuttered, nor that Herbert's failure to utter them would leave her to walk forward into a gulf of unspeakable shame and woe. She had accomplished her object in drawing Herbert aside from the others, and she had prepared the way to account for the scar upon her arm, should Zelma obey the law of nature and chatter about it to others.

That sable damsel had made several ineffectual efforts to speak in private with Zulieme, but they had all been baffled, for on that day it was difficult to find any one alone. With a quaking heart, she saw the steamer approaching which was to bear her aunt away, and she kept saying to herself:

"I is sich a dummy, I an't got gumption to know what to do. Ef that gal *an't* Miss Estelle, I'd git free, and have money too for tellin on 't; but if she *is* the right one, oh, lors! what would 'come o' dis chile? I'd be sent away from de place. I'd be sold to de backwoods, whar I'd never see nobody no mo' dat I ever cared about."

The natural timidity of her race came in play, and fearful of what might happen to herself if she breathed her suspicions to any one, Zelma maintained silence till the steamer was at the landing, and she found herself about to take leave of her aunt.

Spencer and Marion were standing on the levee, surrounded by their friends, all of whom had come down to see them off, and at a little distance was a group of negroes, mostly house servants, who had accompanied the discarded housekeeper and her son to bid them farewell.

Among these was Zelma, in a great state of excitement, which the others attributed to her separation from the only relations she had upon the place. The girl clung to Zulieme's neck, and almost at the last moment said, in sobbing tones:

"Aunty, don't speak out, nor nothin', but mind what I tell you. Find out from Miss Marion ef de young mistis got a hurt on her right arm when she were smashed up; *dere's a scar dar*, an' she says she got it den, but I dunno—I'm 'spicious, cos Miss Lorme says she was with ole Blake and her gal when de marster died. She said dey's so much alike dat one may pass for t'other, and, O my! ef dey's done suffin wi' de right one, an' dis an't she, what'll come o' us all?"

These words were uttered at intervals in a gasping tone, and with much apparent effort, but their effect on the listener was such as to turn her complexion to a dull ashen hue, and for a moment she was unable to speak. The faint doubts that had arisen in her own mind, now surged up in confirmation of the story. Her first impulse was to give Zelma a good shaking, after which she roughly whispered:

"Mind how you talk 'bout this to any one. You'll get yourself in worse trouble than I am in now, if you do. How do you know that Miss Estelle was left with that bad woman? Whisper low, and make haste; they'll soon be going on board the boat, and I must follow."

"I heerd Miss Marion say so, an' Miss Lorme said she knowed it, an' it were a shame. Dey was lookin' at dat dog picter, an' de ole 'oman said ef dey growed up as much alike as when dey was chillen, nobody could tell t'other from which."

Zulieme was trembling now in every fibre of her frame—trembling with fear for the fate of her darling, and also with rage at her own expulsion by one she rapidly decided to be an interloper, who had gained her present position through a crime of the darkest dye. Her first impulse was to advance to the side of Hester and tear from her shoulders the dress she wore, displaying the evidence of her identity with Hester Blake, and proclaiming her the impostor she was. Had she done so, all complications would have been ended on the spot, but prudence withheld her.

She was but a slave, and the mistress of Le Bocage had entire control over her fate. The evidence of such as she would not be received against a white person, and she intuitively felt that this crafty and unscrupulous girl had provided against any suspicions that might be set afloat by her own dependents. The eyes of Zulieme glared on the being her instinct told her was the basest of impostors, and the magnetic influence of her glance seemed to have power over the person on whom it was fixed, for Hester turned from the two of whom she had just taken an affectionate leave, and sought out the form of Zulieme to encounter the baleful expression with which she regarded her.

For a brief moment she quailed before it, but in the next her eyes flashed, and making a step toward the woman, she haughtily said:

"Follow your new mistress, Zulieme, and let me hear a good account of you and your son from Mr. Spencer. You are angry at being sent away, but I have done what is best for you, as you will acknowledge some day."

The woman drew near her and surveyed her features with a less hostile, but a most searching look. Hester bore the scrutiny unmoved, and Zulieme raised her hand and with solemn emphasis said:

"I hopes that when you meet your father up yonder, you will be ready to answer to him for what you have done, Miss. Good-bye! I'm goin', and you are glad to get rid of me. I won't ask you why, bekase it wouldn't be of no use."

She brought her hand suddenly down on the right shoulder of her mistress, feeling an almost insane desire to tear aside the clothing she wore, and expose the scar which, in Hester Blake's childhood, had been seen by more than one of the servants on the place. But the fear that she would be baffled by the intervention of those around her before she had accomplished her purpose, withheld her.

Hester shrank beneath the grasp laid on her, and gently said:

"There, my good Zulieme, that will do. You pain my shoulder, for it is still tender from the hurt it received when I was so severely injured. Remove your hand, and follow Mr. Spencer. You understand very well why I cannot bear to have you near me; your mother's daughter has no right to expect me to retain her about my house."

The woman lifted her hand, and again keenly surveyed the calm face that confronted her.

"She is a Landry, and the stubborn pride of her family is strong in her," was the thought that came to her. "Ef she an't the true one, she's got their blood in her veins, and she'll hold her own against such a helpless enemy as I am. But I can't live with this doubt in my heart. I must find out about the other one, and God grant that *she* may prove my true mistress."

Hester unflinchingly bore the scrutiny of those questioning orbs, and Zulieme, half convinced that her suspicions were groundless, almost humbly said:

"I have always been faithful to you and yours, Miss Estelle, and that poor old woman who is gone to answer for her sins, only served the one she thought she was bound to do for, if she did what she was accused of, which I can't believe. But that's neither here nor there. I bid you good-bye.

Hester nodded coldly, and the next moment Zulieme was moving rapidly over the bank.

When the boat finally moved away, and glided down the stream, Hester drew a long breath of satisfaction. She had sent away from her two persons who might have been most dangerous spies upon her, and now she felt comparatively safe.

Not an hour too soon had they departed, for another steamer came around the upper bend of the river as the packet swept toward the lower one, and while the group of ladies still lingered on the levee, waving their handkerchiefs to their departing friends, a landing was effected, and a single passenger carrying a carpet bag in his hand was put on shore.

One look at him sufficed to assure Hester that this was Macon, come to claim in person the redemption of her pledges, or hurl her down to the depths of contempt and degradation.

For an instant her heart almost died within her, but the next, she felt as if ready to do and dare all to baffle him, and murder gleamed in her eyes as she turned her head away to hide their expression.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

* * *

—Courage, when genuine, is never cruel. It is not fierce. It foresees evil. Its trepidations come either before or after danger. In the midst of peril it is calm and cool. It is generous, especially to the fallen. It is seldom attained.

TRAILING ARBUTUS.

BY NATHAN D. URNER.

Maud and I, roaming the woodlands together,
In a full-flowered summer of long ago,
Found a bright fountain alone in the shadows,
Sheltered and cool in its secret flow,
And, kissing its brim, a Trailing Arbutus,
With sweet coral flowers just sprinkled with snow.

I bent o'er the spring with a bright lily chalice,
And handed up Maud a cupful of the wave,
And then would have plucked for her hair the Arbutus,
When she stayed my bold hand, and, with face sad and grave,
Said, "Nay; the Arbutus is evermore sacred,
Type of His meekness who perished to save.

"Wreathe, if you will, for me the red roses,
Types as they are of my true love for you;
But leave the Arbutus alone in its beauty,
Here in the silence of shadow and dew."
So we touched lips, and moved on to Maud's garden,
Where roses the richest and ruddiest grew.

And I wreathed for her dark hair the brightest and fairest,
And the sun was just dying adown the far West
In a rose-colored flame, when we lingered at parting,
And again she vowed love on my proud loving breast.
The years rolled away, and, from far foreign toiling,
I flew o'er the sea with a lover's unrest.

Still bright in her hair, in their glittering splendor,
The red roses blushed, but no longer for me;
A richer and nobler now basked in her favor,
And bent to her beauty a haughtier knee.
And I murmured, "Oh, false as the roses that crown you,
You are dead and forgotten forever to me!"

I ran to the wood, and there still by the fountain
The Trailing Arbutus in lowliness grew.
"Oh, type of His truth! it is well, sweet Arbutus,
That I plucked you not up from your home in the dew.
Henceforth I love not, unless I find maiden
As lowly and tender and truthful as you."

MARRYING FOR MONEY.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

"Billy, look at them two swells," said a small boy who sat comfortably upon his boot-blacking establishment, near one of the ferries, waiting for customers.

"Millyingaires, I guess," said Billy. Then, in a confidential growl, "If I was a millyingaire you wouldn't catch me a sitting here shining boots a Sunday afternoon. I'd be off on a spree somewheres."

"Me nuther," said Jack. "I've a mind to shy some mud."

Unconscious of these remarks, the two young men who had occasioned them hurried on toward the ferry-boat. They were not exactly millionaires, but considering the usual small salary, it is remarkable how the retail dry goods salesmen of New York manage to produce the general effect of style and wealth, when attired in what might be alluded to as their "Sunday go to meetings." Silver-gray hats, coats of the latest cut, trowsers with the most wonderful flare at the ankle, gloves such as a belle might wear in a ball-room, boots that needed no "shining," studs that, for all any one but a jeweller could tell, were *bona fide* diamonds.

In that guise they started for Maple Hill, the place of their birth, whence they had flown years before, two little orphan boys as helpless and innocent as new-fledged birds, to occupy the fine and lucrative position technically known as "Cash," in the store in which they were now salesmen.

"Well," said the tallest and the handsomest, as they left the boat at Maple Hill landing, "where are *you going* this afternoon, Charlie?"

"To Aunt Dixon's," said Charlie, with something like a blush.

"Always Aunt Dixon's," said the other. "Now, Charlie, Dolly is a very nice girl and all that; but just think of it before you go too far. She hasn't a sixpence to bless herself with. You are a poor young man; and matrimony, on those terms, must be a curse rather than a blessing. Now there are two pretty girls down at the Grove, and you can tell by the way they dress, and all that, that it's solid wealth; and the old lady—I'm sorry, but it's a fact—the old lady can't live long. She knows it herself. She has got the Heart disease, or something of that sort. And she'll divide all she has evenly between the girls, of course. Now I like Angelina; the handsomest girl I know. But there's Ida; and you are not a bad looking fellow, you know. Try going there a while, and see how you like it. I speak as a friend and brother, Charlie."

"Ned," said Charlie, laughing, "I don't admire Miss Ida Fairweather in the least, and all the money in the mint wouldn't tempt me to marry a girl I didn't love. But it's not only Dolly that takes me to our Uncle Dixon's. Don't you remember how kind they were to us, those good old people, when we were a couple of poor little rascals with no one to care for us, when our parents were dead. When the funeral was over, they came into the house—how little was left in it besides our two selves—and she took me by the hand and he took you; and they clothed us and fed us, and found us places in New York, and every holiday was spent with them; and they taught us to call them uncle and aunt, though they are no relations whatever. I love them, Ned; don't you?"

"Of course," said Ned; "I go to see them now and then myself; but they are *very* plain old folks. Don't suppose they own anything more than that little brown house and vegetable garden. He looks like Adam, in his long-tailed coat and straight stove-pipe hat; and they haven't even the sense to dress their granddaughter in style. How Mrs. Fairweather comes to be the old man's sister I can't imagine. However, she went to Europe with her husband, and has seen the best society and all that. There, don't look solemn. Aunty Dixon *is* the sweetest old soul, and your Dolly is pretty. I only spoke as a brother might."

So they parted. And Ned went toward the aristocratic mansion on the heights, and Charlie sought the little brown cottage on the borders of the village.

A nice old lady sat reading her Bible on the porch. At her feet sat a fresh, round, bright-eyed girl, with an old hat full of cotton wadding in her lap. In the midst of this wadding lay a poor little lame, half-fledged, desolate orphan duck, supremely hideous and pitiable, which she was regarding with a tenderness which almost made Charlie desire to change places with the naked little monster.

Over the fence came at that moment old Uncle Dixon, with his watering pot.

"Flowers must have water if it is Sabbath day," he said half-apologetically. "How are ye, Charlie? How's trade?"

"Always feel as if one of my own boys was a coming when I see you," said Aunty Dixon. "I never had a boy. Dolly's ma was all the girl I had either. Fetch out the big rocker, Dolly. We'll sit out here till tea, the grapevines is so cool and green, and the breeze chirks a body up like."

And Charlie sat in the big rocker; and the three chairs swayed back and forth in true Yankee style; and they all looked down at the interesting invalid in the old hat, and talked about him.

It wasn't brilliant talk, neither was it "Shakespeare and the musical glasses," but they were very happy.

After a while, a personage in a large apron stuck her head out of the window, and said:

"Tea;" paused, and added, "Massy me! how splendiferous you do look, Mister Charles! Put on yer hat, and let me see you all fixed."

It was Hannah the "help." Call her *servant*, and she would take French leave. And Charlie put on his hat, and "blushed to be admired."

Then they had a country tea of home-made bread, pot-cheese and strawberries, in such profusion that Charlie could not help remembering the tiny preserve platefuls which passed about the table at his New York boarding-house.

Hannah, having looked in to say that she was "going to see how Miss Green's baby was, and they must excuse her," which was her way of avoiding the idea that she took her meals by herself, and yet sustaining the fact, marched off and left the quartette uninterrupted.

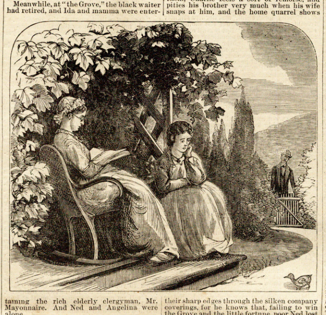
Oh, how nice it was afterward, when Aunty Dixon, amiable soul, went up stairs for something, and Uncle Dixon went to sleep on the old settee, and Dolly, out in the shadow of the porch, nestled closer to him, obeying the impetus of his entwining arm. They sat quite still.

The little rustle of the leaves, the chirp of some insect in the branches—those were the only noises. After a while the moon arose, white and at her full. The light fell over Dolly's innocent face, and surprised her in the act of giving him such a look as the invalid duck had not had all the afternoon.

"My little Dolly!" said Charlie. "Will you be mine some day—mine always?"

And so, when he had kissed her, it was settled.

Meanwhile, at "the Grove," the black waiter had retired, and Ida and mamma were entertaining the rich elderly clergyman, Mr. Mayonnaire. And Ned and Angelina were alone.



"You really look charmingly to-night, Miss Angelina," said Ned.

"Only to-night?" said Angelina. "That's a poor compliment."

"You know what I think about *that*," said Ned.

"No, I don't, I'm sure."

"Want me to tell you?"

"If you like."

"You always look just as I want my wife to look."

"Oh, dear me!" with a light laugh.

"You understand me, don't you, Angelina? What is to be my answer?"

"Well—I'll think about it."

She thought as a broker thinks of stocks. "I wonder what his salary is. He dresses well. I'm five-and-twenty. Mr. Mayonnaire comes to see Ida. I'm sure of *that*, at last. Mamma may die any day. I think his studs are diamonds. He can't be poor. Shall I? Shall I not?"

And there was no tenderness mixed up with this—only a certain cold consciousness that the man was handsome, and so would do her credit.

"Have you thought?" asked Ned.

She nodded.

"Am I to blow my brains out?"

"No."

"I'd like to kiss you."

"But you *can't*. Mr. Mayonnaire is looking directly this way."

So that was settled also.

The two brothers made confession to each other in their bedroom that night, and each pitied the other sincerely.

Time wore on. Ned saved enough to present his Angelina with a very fine engagement ring, and took her to the opera several times in the season; and caught himself wondering once or twice whether it was necessary to powder quite so thickly, and to darken the eyebrows quite so much.

Ned had the best dressed lady in the boxes with him, however; that made up for the very pasty tasting kiss he gave her cheek at parting.

Charlie had begun to save, and had abandoned kid gloves and cigars, and was fighting for promotion. He did all he could to please Dolly, and made her many simple little presents which she loved for his sake. They were to be married in two years.

As for Angelina, how it came about Ned hardly knew; but they were to be married at once. Mrs. Fairweather had had a very serious attack of her heart disease, and Angelina had hinted that it had better be soon, or they might have to wait until she was out of mourning. Her cold calculation rather chilled poor Ned, but he tried to shake off the feeling; and Mr. Mayonnaire was to marry Ida on the same evening.

Charlie came to the wedding, and of course Aunt and Uncle Dixon and Dolly; but two fashionable girls were bride's-maids. And Mrs. Fairweather looked through her glass at Aunt Dixon's simple black silk with a certain scorn. It was not a rep, nor was it new. It might even have been turned.

Poor soul! It was the last time she sneered at anything on earth. She died the next night, alone in her bed, and the brides were telegraphed back. They were weeping when they met, it is true, but Angelina whispered to Ida:

"We were not a day too soon, my dear," for all that.

The poor lady's funeral was over. Ned and, if truth were told, Mr. Mayonnaire also, were growing a little anxious about the reading of the will. And when a few days had passed, and the dress-maker and hair-dresser, the jeweller and shoemaker began to call upon the newly made husbands, and inform them in whispers suitable for an occasion of calamity that they wouldn't be in any haste but for large bills that must be paid, but that of course the ladies had mentioned that little account, matters grew more serious. Rev. Mr. Mayonnaire settled his Ida's bills. But what was Ned to do? He could only make fair promises and wait.

Meanwhile Uncle Dixon talked the matter over with his wife before Charlie and Dolly.

"I'm glad the gals is settled," said he.

"It's good to think of," said Aunty. "Husbands to cherish and purtect 'em, seein' they haven't a cent."

"I thought that Mrs. Fairweather was a wealthy woman," said Charlie, thinking of his brother.

"Well, most folks did," said Mr. Dixon; "but poor Tilly wasn't; no, poor gal. You see, my wife's grandther's second wife she was fond of my wife, and she died without chick nor child. So she left the Grove to her; and says my wife, says she, 'Why, we're comfortable here, and we love the place, and seein' your poor sister is in distress—only a life annuity that don't cover expenses—why, jest let her live there.' You see, poor Tilly's health was going, and we felt for her; 'and we won't say nothin', seein' it's the family,' says she; 'but I'll jest make a will, and give the Grove and them fourteen thousand dollars to Dolly when I'm gone. We don't need no alterations,' says she. So you see it wasn't Tilly's; and, poor gal, she was extravagant, they say, and got in debt. I paid a bill or two myself. And if the gals wasn't settled, they'd miss their fine style, I reckon. As it is, poor Ned'll have his hands full."

"Why, grandpa, you never told me the Grove was yours," said Dolly.

"No," said the old gentleman. "You see, your grandma says, 'Don't post up about the country that Dolly is an heiress; jest let her be courted for love, and then she'll be married happy.' So you see, Charlie, you've got more'n you expected with your wife, and grandma says she'll hand it over when you are married, seein' poor Tilly is gone and the gals married."

So that is the way that Charlie and Dolly his wife came to live at the Grove to-day; and when Ned brings his wife down to visit them, Charlie feels a sort of remorse, and pities his brother very much when his wife snaps at him, and the home quarrel shows their sharp edges through the silken company coverings, for he knows that, failing to win the Grove and the little fortune, poor Ned lost all that he married for.

SCIENCE.

The most ancient carvings on ivory are of far greater antiquity than is generally known—so old, indeed, that Sir John Lubbock ascribes them "to a time so remote that the reindeer was abundant in the south of France, and probably the mammoth had not entirely disappeared." One of the finest collections of such carvings now in existence is that belonging to the South Kensington Museum, which has just been fully described in a handbook compiled for the purpose, wherein it is stated that the ancients are supposed to have been acquainted with the now lost art of softening and bending ivory. Partially decomposed ivory can be preserved from further decay by Professor Owen's plan of boiling it in a solution of gelatine; but no efficacious method of bleaching discolored ivory is yet known.

In the report of the commissioners appointed to investigate the probable duration of the coal supply of Great Britain, it is stated that in view of possible expedients for reducing underground temperatures, a depth of four thousand feet can be fairly assumed as attainable in coal mining. This proposition has been received in some quarters with much doubt and disfavor; one reviewer going so far as to say that no engineer who had a reputation to lose would affix his name to a report which contemplated the economical working of British coal-mines at a lower depth than twenty-seven hundred feet. The deepest colliery in England is some three hundred feet less than this. At four thousand feet, the temperature would be at least 122 degrees Fahrenheit.

The value of oil of turpentine as a remedy in cases of phosphorus poisoning is well established, but the manner in which it affects the system, to produce the desired end, does not seem to be clearly understood as yet. The workmen in a lucifer match factory at Stafford, England, are protected against the injurious action of the phosphorus by wearing a little open vial of oil of turpentine around the neck. A French physician, Dr. Andant of Dax, treated a case where a man attempted to commit suicide by chewing about one hundred and twenty match heads, but unintentionally neutralized their effect by swallowing half an ounce of oil of turpentine, which he took in order to render death absolutely certain, and thereby saved his life.

Speaking of some of the more familiar birds of India, a writer in the *American Naturalist* tells the following story about the common ring-dove: "I have observed a very curious habit of this bird which I never saw noticed in any published account. A sudden shower of rain was one day falling, after some weeks of dry weather. On going to my veranda, I saw, not far off, numbers of these birds lying upon the ground, mostly upon one side, with the opposite wing spread and bent as far as possible over the back. I watched them for some time, and found that their object was evidently to cool themselves by allowing the large rain drops to fall upon the thinly clad portions of the body, under the wing."

The Marquis de Beauvoir, a young Frenchman who has just completed a voyage around the world, saw a noteworthy celestial globe at Pekin. It was eight feet in diameter, and on it was marked every star known in the year 1650, which was visible from that city. This, together with the bronze instruments of the observatory, constructed two hundred and seventy years ago, were in as perfect a condition and as accurate as when they were first made, a fact attributed to the dry climate of the region.

Though the question whether consumption is or is not contagious has now been decided in the negative, Dr. C. J. B. Williams, a high authority, says, "Both reason and experience indicate that a noxious influence may pass from a person in advanced consumption to a healthy person, in close communication, and may produce the same disease;" a statement which at once suggests the query whether a similar proposition is not true in regard to many other non-contagious diseases.

A specimen of the ribbon-fish was recently sent to the South African Museum at Cape Town by its captors. This fish is believed to be one of the creatures which sailors regard as sea-serpents. It is about fifteen feet long without the tail, and is colored like burnished silver. It has a head resembling that of a horse, a large eye, and a mane-like fin down the back.

Four thousand francs are offered by the Academy of Science and Belles-Lettres, at Caen, France, for the best essay on the part played by leaves in vegetation. It must be sent to the Secretary of the Academy before the last day of 1875.

A German physiologist, who has been studying the action and effect of coffee upon the human system, attributes the popularity of that beverage to its enlivening action, rather than to the caffein which it contains.

The nutritive value of various extracts of meat continues to be a subject of scientific experiment in different countries, with results generally adverse to the highly nutritious qualities claimed for them.

English poachers have discovered that the new explosive agent dynamite can be fired under water, and they accordingly employ it to kill salmon and other game fish which they desire to capture.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. A. M. (Kansas) says: "I will state to you as briefly as I can what my trouble is. About a year ago I met a young lady at a party, aged seventeen, and I was very much pleased with her, and she seemed to be equally well pleased with me. When we parted she invited me to call to see her, if I should visit her place of residence, she living in a town some distance from my own, which I did in about a month. After calling several times I declared to her my love, and she said it was reciprocated; so we became engaged in about a week, but did not set the time, as she wished to attend school another year. The great trouble with me is this: There is a young man living in her town that has been very attentive to her for about two years, and I am sure she was engaged to him at one time. I have been told she was engaged to him at the time she engaged herself to me, and he still visits her; but she declares to me that he visits her only as a friend. She is a member of the church, and professes to be a good Christian, and I don't want to doubt her veracity if I can avoid it. While in her society a short time since, I had the misfortune to look inside of a locket she wore around her neck, and beheld his picture; and upon asking her why she wore it, she said she had worn it for two years, and really did not mean anything by it. How do you approve of such conduct, when she is wearing a handsome engagement ring I presented to her? I have told her often that I abhorred anything like deception, and that if she loved the other young man I would release her at any time from our engagement; but she always says that I haven't sufficient confidence in her, and begs me not to talk that way, and says her love for me is unbounded. Now please advise me what to do, for I love the young lady devotedly, and do not want to act too hastily in the matter." We cannot approve of any such nonsense as a woman wearing the likeness of one beau to whom she has been engaged, and the ring of another to whom she is engaged. It is altogether too much like Mormonism to suit our notions. You have a perfect right to say to her, Make your choice, only don't choose both.

F. F. T. (Monroe) writes: "My case is this: Several months ago, a young lady came to our city to visit some friends of hers, and after she had been here a month or two, I had the pleasure of making her acquaintance, and since then I have been with her steady, and am going with her now. I never enjoy myself better than when with her. All I care for is for her company. I never went with any girl steady before. And now what I want to know is this: She expects soon to go home to her mother, and she may never come back to our city again—but I hope and trust that such will not be the case. She is something more than a friend; in fact, I love her, and I am sure she returns my love; but as I am not very well off, I can't ask her to be my wife now. I have a good trade and good health, and in two or three years will be well enough off to marry, but not before, for she has been brought up by a fond mother, and has been well provided for since her childhood, and of course I don't intend that she will have to live any different in future, if I marry her. Now I would like to give her a ring before she goes, but do not know whether to give it to her, and tell her it is not an engagement ring, but simply a present to remember me by, or to give it to her as an engagement ring, and to ask her if she will be my wife in two or three years, and to keep her waiting that long; for after all, something might come to pass before that time, so that I could not marry even then, and it would be cruel to disappoint her after waiting so long. Now what would you do—tell her candidly how it is, or what? Please answer in your next, or as soon as possible, as she will leave soon." Yes, tell her candidly just what you have written to us. Show her the *Ledger*, with this letter of yours in it, and ask her for an answer.

E. C. writes: "I, like all others, come to you for advice, because I have so much confidence in the answers. I take the *Ledger*, and have read it since I was quite a small girl. I am now twenty-three years old, without a father, so I come to you for advice. What I want to know is this: how am I going to get education enough to be a clerk in a store? I have but little learning. I am poor in arithmetic. I have never gone as far as fractions. I do not know how to do examples in fractions at all. How am I going to be good enough in figures to be a good clerk? Must I study mental arithmetic? I do not know much about grammar, and make a great many blunders that I am ashamed of. I want to learn German too, if I only could; but I am in such a position I cannot go to school, and am too poor to hire any one to teach me. I want to earn my own living, and if I could only be a clerk, I should be so happy. Answer me in your next paper, and please tell me how I should manage to get a place. Please do not throw this in the waste basket, or I shall be discouraged." You appear to have so much good sense that it does not seem as though it would take you a great while to master arithmetic sufficiently to serve your purposes as a saleswoman in a store. You can study it without a teacher. You should also study spelling, and practice writing after plain copies, such as are printed in writing-books sold at bookstores. The only way in which you can get a situation in a store is to apply for it, and keep trying till you succeed.

J. E. E. (Otsego) writes: "I have been keeping company with a lady nearly four years, and engaged to be married over one year ago; but shortly before the appointed time her mother died, which postponed our marriage. Shortly after that she was taken sick, and remained very low about three months. I called to see her daily, at her request—her folks and I had not been on good terms for some time—during her illness. We had some words. Since then I did not call to see her; but on learning that she was well I wrote her a letter, but received no answer. Shortly after that I happened to be in the city where she resides; I concluded to send her a note, feeling confident that her folks had kept the letter I had sent before. She did not answer the note, but sent me the engagement ring, and other presents I had given her. After that I received a letter from her requesting me to write. Since then we have kept up a correspondence, but nothing has been said of our former engagement. I am now waiting on another lady. Am I doing wrong? Was our engagement broken when she returned that ring? She don't know that I am waiting on another, but No. 2 knows all the particulars concerning No. 1. I trust you will give me the benefit of your advice." Your old engagement was broken off, virtually, by the return of the ring; but there may be a new, implied engagement, from the renewal of the correspondence. You should, by all means, acquaint the lady with the true state of facts.

Three Young Men say: "This being the first time we've ever troubled you with questions, please oblige us greatly by giving us as early an answer as you can. 1. At what age do male voices generally become changed or settled, and does it injure the voice to sing a good deal before it does become settled? 2. Does it injure or improve the voice to sing both tenor and bass. Should a person, if he can, learn to sing both, or should he sing only one part? 3. Do not male voices become clearer and higher when they have changed? 4. I have heard that sleeping with weights on the chest makes one's voice stronger. Is that so? If it does not improve it, does it injure it? 5. How is the best way to make one's voice strong and clear? By answering the above what may seem foolish questions to you, you will very greatly oblige us. Please don't refer us to some one else, but answer them yourself." 1. Change of voice is one of the signs of passing from boyhood to manhood, and varies in individuals. During the process of change singing should be avoided. 2. "One thing at once" is a good rule all through life. 3. They become stronger, not always higher. 4. We do not believe in sleeping with any other weights on the chest than that of the bed-clothes. 5. Good health, good temper, good habits, and employment under a skilled teacher, are the best means of improving the voice. "We have spoken."

Mollie (Ohio) writes: "My story runs like this: I am but sixteen, and very young looking at that. Where I have been living, a gentleman of eighteen has been paying his attentions to me for some time; but I have looked up to him more as a brother, and he has treated me more as a sister than anything else. About a month ago, however, he declared his love to me; and, thinking he was just trifling with me, I accepted it, believing that he would soon get over his boyish notions, as his desire was to have me wait four or five years. After a couple of interviews with him, I found out he was in earnest. I told him then, I was sorry for the way I had encouraged him, and desired to break the engagement off, which I did that night. The next evening I received a note from him declaring that he would be my ruin; and since, I have received annoying letters threatening revenge. Now what I want to know is, if there is any way by which I can have these annoyances stopped? I have the proofs of what he has sworn to do." Sending threatening letters is a criminal offence, for which a person is liable to indictment and punishment.

D. McL. (Mobile, Ala.) says: "Two years ago I left my native State, (Mich.,) to commence business in this place, as I was offered a good position and fair salary. I was then between seventeen and eighteen years old, and had formed the acquaintance of a young lady whom I esteemed very much; but as I was so young I concluded that it was only a boy's fancy, and would soon wear off. So I simply asked her to open a friendly correspondence with me, which she did, and has written regularly ever since. I was up home on a visit a year ago, and of course met the young lady, who seemed very much pleased to see me, and I am pretty confident loves me. Now what I wish to know is, would you advise me to ask the young lady's hand in marriage, and request her to wait for me until I am older? I do not approve of long engagements, *but delays are dangerous*, and I love her dearly. My salary now is so that I can easily save $500 a year, but I have to depend on that alone. Please advise me through your answers to correspondents, and oblige an old subscriber." Write, by the next post.

D. V. (West Acton) writes: "Will you oblige me by answering a simple question? Can a lady ask a gentleman to marry her, providing it is leap-year? This question has been discussed in our place a number of times, but no one seems to know anything about it. Please answer as soon as possible, for I should like to end this talk by having it known whether it is proper or not for a lady, in leap-year, to ask a man to marry her." It is not proper for a lady to do such a thing. Leap-year does not release ladies from those obligations of delicacy and modesty which nature imposes upon them. It would offend any man of refined taste to have a lady ask him to marry her in leap-year, unless the case were one of those exceedingly rare ones which would justify her doing so in any year. All the talk about the leap-year privileges of ladies is mere badinage and pleasant banter, and it is never so misconstrued by any real lady as to lead her to act in an immodest or forward manner.

S. M. (Louisville) writes: "Will you please answer the following for me? When Mr. A is walking with Miss B and they meet Miss C, and both ladies wish to be introduced, he knowing Miss C, should he introduce Miss C to Miss B, or Miss B to Miss C? Please answer this, for I really wish to know what is the proper course to pursue." The more usual practice would be to introduce the lady whom you meet to the one you are walking with; but if there is a great difference in their ages, introduce the younger to the elder.

Nell (Indiana) says: "Knowing how kind you are to others, in answering their many questions, I come to you for the first time for advice, and I trust you will not throw it aside, but answer immediately. I will state my case truthfully, believing you will make allowance for any deficiencies in composition, etc. I am engaged to a good, true and noble gentleman. I love him with the purest and deepest devotion, and I know it is fully reciprocated. I have been personally acquainted with him a little more than a year, and we have been engaged about six months. I have a gentleman friend that I have been corresponding with for two years; he is a most perfect gentleman, and stands high in the estimation of the public. He was in our city a few weeks ago. I told him about my engagement. After telling him all, he told me he loved me, and called that evening with the intention of asking me to be his wife. I could never love him, and I told him so. As he was leaving, he asked me if I would still correspond with him, as he would always be my true friend, etc. I was somewhat surprised, for I thought of course he would want our correspondence discontinued, after knowing all. I told him I would, though I would much rather not correspond with him, but do not see how I can do otherwise without wounding his feelings. He answers my letters very promptly, although I always wait several weeks. I told my lover all about it. He says he does not care if I do correspond with him, but sometimes I am inclined to think he does care. Now I shall look anxiously for your reply, for I really do want to do right, and will do just as you tell me. Please answer and oblige." Taking all things into account, we think it will be wiser to tell the gentleman firmly, that without ceasing to respect and esteem him, you prefer the discontinuance of letters. As a gentleman he will acquiesce.

O. A. (Beloit, Wis.) writes: "If a young man, thirty years old, is too poor to marry, should he oblige himself to keep aloof from female society? And would it be proper for him to invite lady friends to attend church with him, and other places of moral repute? The point is this: I know several poor, but upright gentlemen, who are in doubt upon these questions, and through me desire to get your opinion. They are not in condition to marry, yet frequently deprive themselves of a pleasant companionship for fear that their attentions may be construed into something deeper than mere present enjoyment. Hoping that I have stated the case sufficiently clear, I ask earnestly for an immediate reply." It by no means follows that because you are too poor to marry now, you need continue so. Begin by laying up part of your wages, no matter how small they are, and you will be surprised at the rapidity with which your pecuniary condition will improve. There is no objection to your going to church with ladies, only do not be too exclusive in your attentions to any one, unless you desire to become engaged to her. In this country it is a young man's own fault, if he has his health, to remain very long in a condition to prevent his marrying.

Bella M. (Minnesota) says: "I have always read your paper with pleasure, and would now like to ask your advice on an important subject. Until I was fourteen I was much attached to a young gentleman, and he always appeared to be happy in my society, and often declared his intention of making me his wife as soon as we were old enough. Circumstances compelled us to part, but we corresponded till a year ago, when I received a letter from him, and answered it, and since then I have not heard from him once. Do you think that he wishes our correspondence to cease, and our affection in by-gone days to be considered a childish affair, and would it be improper for me to go in company and correspond with another, of whom I have a high opinion?" The young person has not corresponded with us; but we presume he considers the affection before fourteen a childish affair. We do also. As to the new candidate for your "affection," before we give any opinion we require to be informed of your present age, and the views of your parents or guardian in the premises.

C. A. Sharpe (Chicago) says: "Will you be kind enough to have your correspondent answer the following questions? There is a dispute among a few of us young people on the subject, and we want light. Has Noah Webster not given in his dictionary his definition of all the words in his dictionary? Did he write these definitions, or did he cull them from other authors? When he gives a name after a definition, does he mean that that is Pope's—if Pope is the name used—definition, or is it his, and he cites this name as his authority, the same as the historian refers us to foot notes, which point us to his sources of information? Is he not more of an author than a compiler? Would you call a compiler, a mere gatherer of quotations, an author? Please answer as soon as you can, as we have all argued ourselves into anger against each other, and nothing but a higher voice can drown our murmurs." The examples given at once authorize and illustrate the definition, and we consider Webster an author, and of a very high order too. Keep cool, please.

Julia (Boston) says: "Having been a reader of your valuable paper for many years, I now venture to ask your advice on a point which has long been troubling me. I am a lady of twenty years of age, and have a young lady friend of about eighteen who, for some time past, has been receiving the visits and attentions of a gentleman. I have recently learned that the aforesaid gentleman is a bad character. Now what I wish to know is this: how can I best break this sad news to my friend? I love her very dearly, and we are very good friends; but still I fear that if I tell her anything of this, she may take offence, for I know that she is sincerely attached to this miserable scamp. Please answer immediately, for I await your reply with great anxiety." If she is a sensible girl and *believes in you*, she will not resent permanently your honesty. Make sure of your ground, however; and if you can think of no better way of breaking the ice, why, show her this, and ask her what she would do if in your place.

L. W. says: "I have been a reader of your valuable paper for three years, and have never had occasion to ask your advice until the present. About one year ago I met a young lady, and kept company with her about nine months. I love her very dearly, and she professes to love me in return. About three months ago, a man who is my enemy married her mother, who was a widow, and has since forbidden me to keep company with his step-daughter, and will not even allow her to speak to me. She accepts the company of another young man since she has been forbidden to speak to me, although she says she does not care for him any more than a friend. Any advice you can give as to the course I should pursue will be gladly received." If the young lady accepts the guardianship in question, you can do nothing but await developments. If she held out for you, it might be a question whether you should encourage disobedience, but there is no evidence at present that she has any particular zeal in your behalf.

Daisie (Great Barrington, Mass.) says: "As you are so kind as to answer so many questions asked you, I am going to ask you one, and hope you will give me an early answer to it. A young gentleman has been going with me for some time, and I think a great deal of him; but although he seems very devoted to me, he has never told me that he cared anything for me, and what I want to know is, how can I find out whether he loves me or not? By answering this, you will greatly oblige." It is best to wait a little. Only you should remember what is due to yourself, and make him understand that, as an ordinary friend, he cannot be allowed to associate himself with you before the community as a lover would be supposed to do. How to do this, we should no more think of telling you than of teaching the other daisies to look bright.

Nellie (Exeter) says: "I am in trouble, and wish your advice. I am a young lady, governess in a rich family with two or three young children. The oldest son of my employer, a handsome young man of twenty-four—only three years my senior—has offered me his heart and hand. I do not love him, and cannot, so of course I have refused him; but he still continues to press his suit. I do not want to leave the family, to which I am very much attached; for if I do, I know not what will become of me, as I am a poor girl, with no other means of earning a livelihood. What shall I do?" Explain to him that, not loving him, it would be impossible for you to accept him, and if he has true gentlemanly feeling, he will respect your character, and you will probably suffer no further inconvenience.

Johnnie B. A. (Pleasant Hill, Mo.) says: "I am a young man, eighteen years of age, and am very desirous of receiving a good education. I have some two or three spare hours which I can devote to study if I could get some good person to advise and give me instruction. I wish to learn the French language very much, also the German and Latin. Which of these is the most beneficial to me as an improvement in my conversation? Please answer my questions in the correspondents' column of the *Ledger*." Procure a Latin Grammar and Dictionary, and set about learning the grammar much as you learnt English. If you can engage a teacher, so much the better. After Latin, French, and then if you can, German. Latin is a good beginning.

Drugs (New York) says: "I am a young man, twenty-one years of age. I have no friends to go to for advice. If you will answer the following question, you will do me a lasting service, and I will thank you from the bottom of my heart. I wish to qualify myself for a drug clerk, as my taste runs that way. Can you tell me how I can gain sufficient knowledge in the shortest possible time?" Dr. Doremus of New York has been engaged in the attempt to secure competently educated drug clerks—a most proper effort; and if you inquire for the examination papers recommended by his committees, they will show what kind of knowledge you need, and help you also in finding the proper place for learning.

Enoch Arden (New York) says: "I take the liberty of asking you a question which I hope you will answer. I am in a queer position I have become infatuated with two Young Ladies of my acquaintance and have a great liking for them one is very mild and sedate while the other is of a jealous and haughty disposition what I want to know is how do you do in a case like that" We are not in the habit of getting into a case like that. Explain the state of your feelings to the jealous and haughty one, and we are much mistaken if she does not put to them, what you omit in your letter, namely, *a full stop*.

Omega A. (Port Gibson, Miss.) says: "Please tell me if society—well established—in this country, requires the lady to recognize a gentleman first before he salutes her, and whether this is incumbent upon the lady in the parlor, or wherever met? Answer in your valuable paper." On the street a gentleman must wait for recognition from the lady before he makes his bow; in the parlor a gentleman stands up before a lady in any case, and so necessarily initiates the movement toward mutual recognition.

Carrie says: "Will you please tell me through your paper who 'Ethel Lynn' is, the author of the beautiful poetry which appears in your *Ledger*?" So long as the lady chooses to preserve her incognito, we have no right to disclose her name. She will doubtless some day collect and publish her fine lyrics, and then possibly divulge the name of one whose poetical taste and faculty form but one of many claims to respect and affection.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*